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CORRESPONDENCE

Stolen phrases

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: John Garvey ["Creeping Dimness," October 21] unwittingly illustrated his own point when he attributed to Mort Sahl the observation that the history of the American presidency is a disproof of the theory of evolution. Sahl "stole" the line from Henry Adams: "The progress of evolution from President Washington to President Grant, was alone evidence enough to upset Darwin" (*The Education of Henry Adams*). This also suggests that Garvey may have the wrong villain. He attributes the decline to the effects of TV, but since Adams saw the same process in operation more than a century ago, Garvey surely cannot be entirely correct!

JIM CHAPIN

Force of logic

Stamford, Conn.

To the Editors: A vote of thanks must go to *Commonweal* for bringing us David R. Carlin, Jr.'s mature and intelligent analysis of the problems facing Catholics in the world of politics or at the voting booth regarding the abortion issue ["It's My Party," October 7].

There are other points that might be added to his balanced thinking. If one leaves the Democratic party because its platform includes freedom of reproductive choice, perhaps one must also give up citizenship in a country where the Supreme Court legalizes abortion? And should not one also abandon the Republican party because its principal leader, Ronald Reagan, became one of the first government officials to sign a bill permitting abortion: as governor of California? Should all of us Catholics who believe that abortion is homicide of the unborn be forced to surrender our right and neglect our duty to vote?

The right to take life belongs to God whether it be the life of the unborn or the life of the sinner. Our country under its present Republican administration defends the death penalty for sinners, even when they are fifteen-year-old juveniles. Our government sells arms to terrorists in Iran and then uses the profits to send military supplies to mercenaries who blow up and murder civilians in Nicaragua, including especially priests and lay Catholic leaders, teachers, and health workers. Should we vote for those who support drug dealers like Noriega who either directly or indirectly are taking innocent lives? Should we continue in power a political party that mines harbors of countries with which it is not at war and that writes and prints booklets on the arts of torture?

Commonweal articles are well-balanced. May its letters to the editors be a little more pugnacious?

LOUIS D. KIRCHNER

Creation & catastrophe

Chevy Chase, Md.

To the Editors: It was with great interest that I read Lawrence Cunningham's review of *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology* [October 21], especially his remark that unlike Chardin, Berry had nothing to fear from censorship. Ironically, the very same day the news came that Catholics United for the Faith (CUF)—through its errand-boy Cardinal Ratzinger—had silenced theologian Matthew Fox. Actually both Fox and Berry are saying the same thing, something which needs to be said, i.e., our concentration on redemption has led us to downgrade interest in creation, which is a major reason the world is on the verge of ecological catastrophe. If anything, Berry is a bit further from the traditional theological mainstream than Fox. Why take after Fox first? Simple. Berry has always kept a lower profile. Who can doubt that sometime in the relatively near future Berry will be silenced as were Chardin and Fox? In these circumstances it is increasingly difficult to deny the argument of both Fox and Berry, that the church seems determined to become increasingly irrelevant to the most pressing problems of the human race.

VICTOR FERKISS

Dismissing Berry?

Port Burwell, Ontario

To the Editors: As any editor would be, I am gratified by Lawrence Cunningham's review of *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology* [October 21]. However, there are two points of clarification I think are important. The review could be read as implying that Berry is a "hopeless romantic" about New Age movements, especially the "Greens." In point of fact, Berry notes strengths and weaknesses in many movements and causes, as well as Teilhard's anti-ecological bias.

Second, Cunningham calls Berry "sanguine" about a dawning ecological age, and dismisses "some of the more apocalyptic pronunciamentos like those of the Club of Rome reports (cited with approval by Berry)." I find it incredi-

(Continued on page 696)

Commonweal welcomes letters on subjects treated in its pages. Letters should not exceed 250 words and are subject to editing for clarity and space limitations.

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CONTENTS

Volume CXV, Number 22

Correspondence	674
Editorials	675
Veronica's handshake: *Antonio Ramirez*	677
Trading away the future?: *Jordan Bishop*	678
Middle East dead end: *J. Bryan Hehir*	680
Faithful conflict: *John Garvey*	681
An anthropology for Christmas: *Robert G. Hoyt*	683
Poetry: *Anne Porter*	685
Screen: *Tom O'Brien*	686
Stage: *Gerald Weales*	687

BOOKS

The Great Divide: *Paul Baumann*	688
The Truth about Lorin Jones: *Barbara A. Bannon*	690
Science and the Unborn: *Thomas A. Shannon*	691
Spare Days: *Paul Wilkes*	693
Religious booknotes: *Lawrence S. Cunningham*	694
Index to Vol. CXV	697

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COMMONWEAL

Wholly innocent

AIDS has become the leading cause of death in women aged 25 to 34 in New York City. The babies born to them often contract the AIDS virus while still in the womb. And that is the beginning of a sometimes protracted, sad story about which statistics tell only a part. The official national count of children with AIDS is 1,000, but government health officials and many medical professionals believe the actual number is triple that. By 1991, it is estimated that 20,000 children may be infected—mostly by their parents, who contracted the virus through intravenous drug use. In New York City one of every sixty-one newborns tests positive for the AIDS antibody. AIDS is now a leading contributor to the city's rising infant mortality rate. Last January, 260 children in the city were reported to carry the AIDS virus; 190 of them have already died.

Medical facts tell part of the story as well. Because their parents are unable to care for them at home, healthy young children are being retained and HIV-infected children are increasingly being abandoned in urban hospitals. Often one or both of the parents are addicted to drugs; in some cases they also have AIDS, some have already died of it. Fortunately, not all children who test positive for the AIDS antibody will get the disease. With proper early care, it is possible for a child's developing immune system to fight off the virus. But it takes nearly two years for that system to develop fully, and newborns, unlike older children, seldom outlive the disease.

Once AIDS develops, most children suffer irreversible brain damage. Learned skills, walking and talking for example, disappear with the onset of dementia. Some children suffer from malabsorption—the inability to draw nutrients from food—and slowly starve to death. Others die of common childhood illnesses, measles and chicken pox, because AIDS cripples their ability to fight them. Still others die of heart attacks, pneumonia, and other ailments common to adult AIDS patients.

The facts are grim. Prevention and cure lie somewhere in the future. Meanwhile the number of children with AIDS is growing rapidly and inexorably.

So another important part of this AIDS story is told by people who are doing what they can for these children and their families. Two accounts illustrate how important and how painful that effort can be.

For children with AIDS in hospitals and clinics, Northern Lights Alternatives has developed a program that enlists volunteers to give the kind and amount of attention that medical personnel are generally too overworked to offer. That means playing with the babies or children and showing them affection; sometimes it means a trip to the circus. Volunteers can also act as an advocate for a child, reporting to their program director any problems with nutrition, cleanliness, or medical attention.

Who volunteers? "A lot of young professionals," says program director Shelly

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Raffle. "We're not social workers or nurses or the parents; we are there as friends, holding, playing, giving one-on-one care." It isn't easy work. First, volunteers have to pass through a long screening process required by the hospitals. And then they often become attached to the children, many of whom die, while others are moved to foster homes.

Another account: About two years ago, Msgr. John Fagan, director of Little Flower Children's Services of New York, developed a program to shelter temporarily infants whose mothers were cocaine addicts (these so-called "boarder babies" were living in hospitals even though they were healthy) and eventually to find them foster care. Fagan ran an ad in the *New York Times* asking for foster parents for these "little guys." To date the Little Guys program has placed 700 infants. Over time, seven of those children showed symptoms of illness, were tested, and found positive for the AIDS virus. Two of the seven have died. But people—mostly middle-aged couples—continue to come forward to take a baby home as a temporary guest, to make room in their lives for a child who is suffering the loss of a mother and a family; and who may be suffering from AIDS.

"It's a valley of tears program," Fagan says, "everybody weeps: the parents, the foster parents, the babies, the nurses...."

ANOTHER MODEST PROPOSAL

What if some years from now it is found that human fetal remains are a highly effective and efficient fertilizer—that its use would triple the rice and grain harvests of China and India, and double U.S. and Canadian soybean output? Unlike chemical fertilizers, it would not pollute the environment, neither would it pose health dangers to field workers nor persist as residue in crops. Noncarcinogenic, nonmutagenic. Furthermore, since such remains are naturally and locally produced, the manufacturing process would be nonpolluting and low-cost, while distribution expenses would be minimal. The perfect fertilizer.

"Preposterous!" you exclaim.

But consider: medical scientists now see fetal tissues as the potential medium for fighting a range of human miseries, including AIDS, Parkinson's disease, childhood diabetes, and other neural and immunological defects. Fetal tissues are particularly manipulable and fast growing, and researchers are eager to acquire ready access to them. Medical research today, fertilizer tomorrow.

"Outrageous!" you insist. "Next thing you'll be dragging in the Nazi medical experiments. Spare me your slippery slope analogies."

Okay, let's just stand at the top of the slope and look.

This past spring when the National Institutes of Health (NIH) received a grant application to implant fetal brain tissue experimentally in people suffering from Parkinson's disease, a moratorium was ordered until the scientific, ethical, and legal issues could be fully studied. As the experimental and potential use of fetal tissues and organs grows, the NIH appointed a twenty-one member advisory panel to take a look. The panel concluded its work in November, voting 13-3 (with five members absent) to recommend the acceptability of the experimental use of fetal tissues and organs.

Even those voting to approve the experiments agree that there are some ethical problems here, including the impropriety of buying and selling fetal remains; of women conceiving and aborting in order to provide a transplantable organ or to make money; of researchers attempting to influence an abortion decision, for example, by encouraging a woman to prolong a pregnancy until a needed organ is optimally developed. But most think that these matters can be regulated. And, of course, for a time they will be—for just about as long as it takes researchers to successfully treat Parkinson's or AIDS or some other serious disease with fetal tissues or organs.

The more fundamental issue at stake—abortion—hardly seems to enter the discussion. Since abortion is legal, most proponents of fetal research argue that there is no reason to treat these fetal remains any differently from the remains of miscarried fetuses or stillborn infants where parents are free to consent to their medical use. Why not in the case of abortion as well?

Why not? We are at the beginning of a process that is likely to end with the widespread use of fetal remains for a variety of experimental and, inevitably, therapeutic uses. Yet, for many Americans, abortion entails the taking of human life; it is a moral evil. It is because of these deep disagreements on abortion, for example, that Congress passed and the courts upheld the Hyde Amendment, which bars the use of federal funds to pay for abortions. Even many who would not make abortion illegal recognize that it remains—and should remain—in a morally perilous category apart from other medical procedures. Society should not accept the experimental and therapeutic uses of fetal tissues and organs obtained from abortion. In voting as it did, the advisory panel wrongly makes abortion a normal part of medical practice.

But the advisory panel's views are just that—advisory. NIH officials can still bar these experiments by refusing to fund them with what after all is taxpayers' money. If they do not, President Reagan or, after him, George Bush should issue an executive order banning the practice.

Have a blessed Christmas
& a joyful New Year!
From all of us at COMMONWEAL

(In keeping with its usual practice, the next issue of Commonweal will be dated January 13, 1989.)

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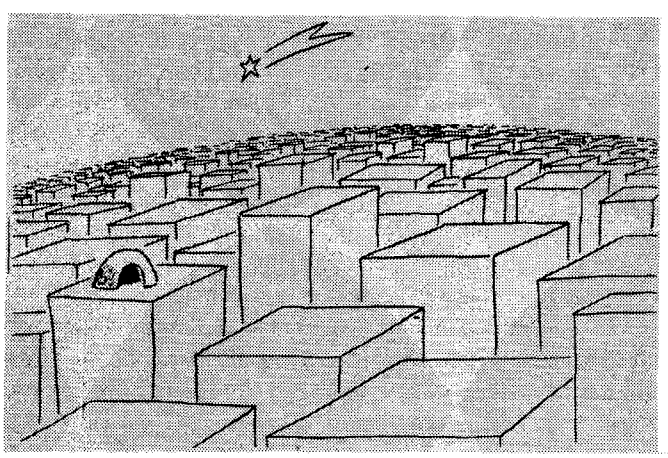
ET CETERA

MORE ELECTION AFTERTHOUGHTS During the 1988 presidential campaign, the U.S. bishops kept a low profile for which many observers were grateful. Some cynics argued that that was only because there were no Catholic candidates, especially there was no Mario Cuomo. Perhaps they are right. But after the 1984 campaign with what seemed to be implicit endorsements by some bishops of Ronald Reagan and nearly explicit condemnations of Geraldine Ferraro by others, the bishops may have realized just how counterproductive such strong actions could prove to their own work together and how imprudent it was to try to direct American Catholics so closely in their voting.

But while the bishops were prudent, it is not so clear that others were. We were particularly struck toward the end of the campaign with the number of Catholic universities, colleges, and high schools that appeared as backdrops to the Bush campaign. Presumably there was a standing invitation to both candidates to speak to the student bodies of these schools, invitations that the Dukakis campaign apparently did not take advantage of. But the Bush campaign did take advantage, not only of the invitation but of the opportunity of seeming to appear as the "Catholic" candidate. Smoke and mirrors are a permanent feature of campaigns and Catholic institutions would do well to draw up guidelines that would protect their good names while allowing their students to hear and question the candidates. *The Brooklyn Tablet* in an editorial took particularly strong exception to Bush's performance at Christ the King High School, where the cheering high schoolers seemed to join the candidate's support of the death penalty and where he used the appearance to receive a number of police-group endorsements. This is not introducing students to complex public-policy issues about which honest people disagree; this is taking advantage of the students' immaturity and enthusiasm. But worse, the nature of the appearances at the Queens high school and other Catholic institutions seemed to imply a "Catholic" blessing that we doubt any of them meant to give.



BETHLEHEM CANCELS CHRISTMAS The town government of Bethlehem has decided not to hold its official celebration of Christmas this year. It has canceled the Christmas Eve reception for Israeli and Palestinian officials as well as the Boy Scout Parade; there will be no lights in Manger Square and the forty-foot Christmas tree will remain bare. Deputy Mayor Hanna Nasser said this was a way of showing "concern for our dead and for our detainees." The town lies within the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Such celebrations, of course, are not at the heart of the Christian understanding of Jesus' coming, but the reason for their cancellation is a powerful reminder of how elusive is that peace his coming promised.

REPORT FROM CHILE

VERONICA'S HANDSHAKE

PREPARING FOR DEMOCRACY

On October 6, 1988, the day after the historic "No" vote in Chile's plebiscite on extending General Augosto Pinochet's dictatorial rule for another eight years, Veronica Vukasovic, a twenty-five-year-old graduate student of social work, walked up to a *carabinero* (one of Chile's militarized policemen), shook his hand, and said: "I want to greet you without hate and without violence. Today we are all Chileans." Four years before, September 11, 1984, a contingent of *carabineros* had dragged Vukasovic from a peaceful demonstration at the University of Concepción and forced her and other young women and men to run between two lines of policemen, who beat them with nightsticks. "I was so frightened," she recalls, "that I felt no pain. All I wanted to do was to cover my head."

A secret policeman then beat her with a telephone cable sheathed in rubber (so as not to leave marks), forced her to lie face down on the ground, and threatened her with torture and summary execution. When the students were finally moved out, she was again forced to run the gauntlet of nightsticks. But that wasn't the worst thing that happened. "The worst was seeing a friend shot to death," says Veronica Vukasovic.

When hundreds of thousands of Chileans took to the streets to celebrate their victory in the "Yes-No" plebiscite, gestures of nonviolent reconciliation, like Veronica's handshake, were common. Front-page photographs appeared in newspapers, notably in the small but energetic anti-Pinochet press, showing "No" supporters hugging smiling, if somewhat wary, *carabineros*. I had one of these papers tucked under my arm during an excursion to a couple of shops in Santiago. Wherever I stopped the paper was picked up by smiling sales clerks and cheerfully passed around for co-workers to admire.

During my one-week visit to Chile as a guest of the Chilean

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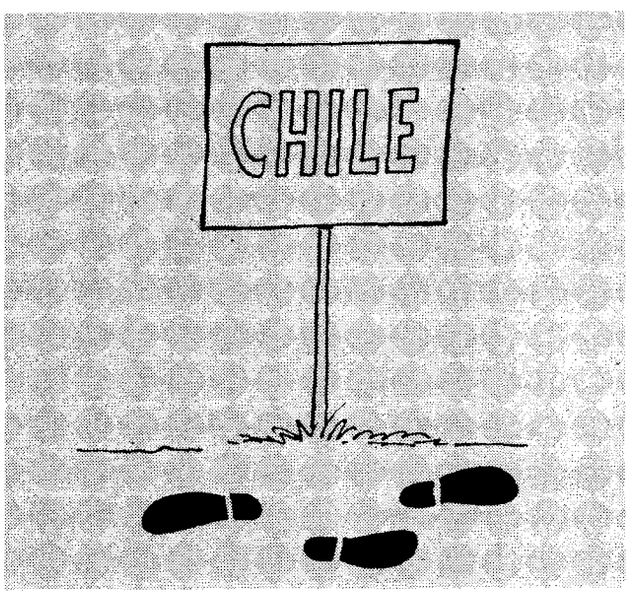
teachers' union, invited to observe the plebiscite, it seemed clear to me that most Chileans want to return to the constitutional civility that characterized Chilean political life for most of its 150-plus years as an independent, democratic society. As Manuel Camilo Vial, the vigorously anti-Pinochet, pro-worker Roman Catholic bishop of San Felipe (the small town where I watched the voting), put it: "The last fifteen years have been a parenthesis in our history. We are ready to resume our real lives."

A spirit of nonviolence, nurtured I believe by the Chilean church's remarkable record these past fifteen years of action and teaching on the side of the people and of justice and reconciliation, has a genuine chance to succeed in what, at first, would appear an inhospitable climate.

There are serious difficulties to overcome. Several thousand Chileans died at the hands of Pinochet's police and military forces. More that 600 *desaparecidos* are still unaccounted for. Yet the lust for vengeance, at least for the time being, is subdued. An advertisement placed in opposition magazines by the survivors of the victims of political murders specifically rejects the death penalty while calling for the prosecution and punishment of the guilty. The sixteen-party coalition which mounted the successful campaign for the "No" vote has agreed not to seek special laws against human rights violators but rather to prosecute them under existing criminal laws.

There is, of course, an element of prudence here. The "No" vote only sets up the conditions under which the opposition parties, the military, and the government can begin to negotiate a transition back to democracy. Pinochet shows signs of wanting to hang on to his authority come what may. The hope for a nonviolent return to democracy may depend on how many supporters of the dictatorship, in and out of the military, are willing to deal with the democratic forces. One does not further such a delicate dialogue by threatening people's tribunals and revenge.

The church will play an important role in the coming months as it has in the years past. Just as the Chilean church helped save thousands of lives during the worst periods of Pinochet's repression, it may be in a position to prevent violent confrontations as the country tries to regain its democratic bearings.



What the church teaches can make a difference if it lives up to those teachings. Veronica, the young woman who chose forgiveness over hate, is a Christian Democrat. As one of the people who helped make arrangements for our group of trade unionist observers, Veronica frequently talked with us about politics and Chile's future. I had come to believe that she was indeed a devoted democrat. After she shook hands with that *carabinero,* I realized, even more strongly, that I had met a rare Christian as well.

ANTONIO RAMIREZ

Antonio Ramirez is an editor of the New York Teacher, *the publication of the New York State United Teacher, American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. He visited Chile during the plebiscite as part of a team of labor union observers.*

REPORT FROM CANADA

TRADING AWAY THE FUTURE

BUSINESS BUYS A MAJORITY

What have been touted as the most important general elections since 1911 have just resulted in a comfortable majority for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's Conservatives. In a three-party race, the Tories, four years after their 1984 landslide, chalked up a comfortable majority with 170 seats in the 295-seat House of Commons, with an impressive 43 percent of the popular vote. The Liberals who had only 40 seats in the last house, have 82, and the New Democratic Party increased their position to 43.

The Conservatives began the campaign before the elections were called with billions of dollars in special projects around the country, particularly in Quebec. As Ross Howard noted in the Toronto *Globe and Mail* (November 22, 1988): "A $12 billion spending spree of subsidies for eastern and western megaprojects during the three-month precampaign period was repeatedly cited as a Tory record of achievement, rather than election promises, during the campaign." This was followed, once the elections were called, with a tightly structured Madison Avenue media campaign, in which Mr. Mulroney's handlers kept him carefully isolated from the public and the press. Halfway through the seven-week campaign, Liberal leader John Turner's forceful presentation of the case against the Mulroney-Reagan bilateral trade deal—usually referred to by its supporters as the "Free Trade Agreement"—brought this issue to the center of the campaign. The opposition Liberals were dramatically swept into a tie position in the polls. At this point the business interests mobilized a multi-million-dollar advertising campaign in support of the trade deal, while an opposition coalition consisting of assorted Canadian national-

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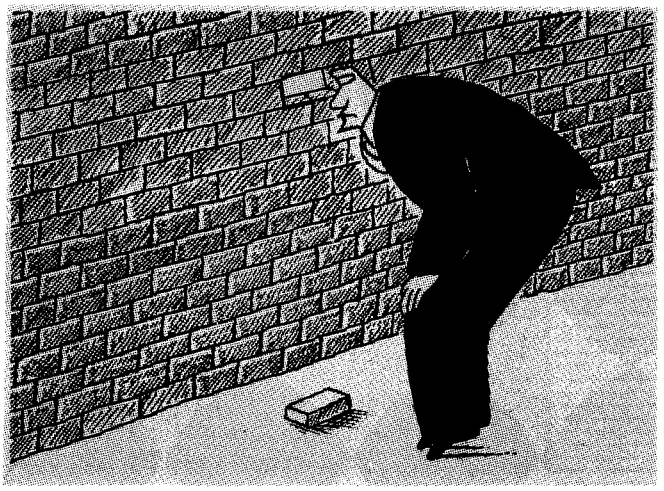

ists, trade unions, women's organizations, environmentalists, church, agriculture, and cultural groups campaigned against it.

The deal—or half deal, since some of the most important provisions in it are yet to be defined—was fought for the most part on a class basis, although Canadians were typically too polite to allude to this in public. But it was in fact big business against almost everyone else. Unions fear that the "level playing field" and the mobility provided for capital will mean open season on unions, who will be competing with Puerto Rico, Georgia, and Mexico's *maquiladoras*. If they don't buckle under in contract negotiations, the threat is always there that the company may move to friendlier climates where unions are not a problem.

Women's groups and church representatives fear pressure to "harmonize" Canadian social programs with the less universal and much less generous ones in the United States. When these issues were raised, the Tories angrily waved copies of the text in the faces of opposing debaters or hecklers, saying, "Look, there is nothing in the deal about these programs," while the others shouted as loudly, "Why are they not explicitly protected?"

The difficulty arises from the fact that a U.S. company paying double the amount for a health service package than a similar company in Ontario has to pay may feel that the Canadian company is being subsidized. In fact, the Canadian company's labor costs are cheaper because Canada has an efficient, universal health insurance system. Whether this will be considered a subsidy under American law is not clear. It would not be under GATT rules, since it is a universal program rather than a subsidy to a particular region or sector. Opposition doubts stem from the fact that under the agreement, U.S. law prevails over the agreement (while Canadians are required to bring their legislation—federal and provincial—in line with it). The dispute-settling mechanism is only empowered to determine whether or not U.S. law has been fairly applied. The U.S. has given up little or nothing.

In addition to problems with the trade deal, many grassroots groups simply do not trust the Tories. In this context, a number of observers feel that as a result of the debates, and of the Tories' strenuous denials that social programs are on the block, it would be politically impossible for the Tories, even with their comfortable majority, to let Canada's social programs be eroded by the trade agreement. One hopes that American officials are aware that pushing too hard on this question could easily imperil the whole agreement.

Another problem arises from Canada's subsidies to certain regions of the country. Even as the election campaigns were in progress, an American company was enticed to Cape Breton Island by a $6 million capital grant from the Atlantic Provinces Opportunities Agency, a sum equal to the capital provided by the American company. It is extremely doubtful that this kind of targeted regional subsidy would be allowed under the trade deal. This is complicated by two factors. Mr. Mulroney has, in this deal, bought a pig in a poke. If the Canadian enabling legislation is passed, as it undoubtedly will be now, Canada will be locked into a trade agreement that has no definition of *subsidies*. This is to be the subject of ongoing discussions over the next seven years, and as opponents of the deal point out, Canada has nothing left to bargain with. Yet care was taken to allow the American approach to regional disparity—allocation of defense contracts—to continue in both countries. Subsidies are also allowed in the development of energy resources—another area in which Americans have a strong interest. The deal removes almost all screening of investment from the U.S., and gives U.S. companies "national status" in financial and other services. And while cultural industries are excepted, people in the Canadian film industry are quite upset that they have failed to gain any guaranteed access to the *Canadian* market, already largely controlled by American distributors.

Mr. Mulroney's hold on Quebec was a key factor in the Tory majority. The Liberals got little more than the English language vote in Quebec. The Conservatives, with strong support both from Robert Bourassa's provincial Liberal party and the separatist *parti Quebecois*, carried the rest: 63 of Quebec's 75 seats. This was the result of a number of factors, not the least of which is Quebec nationalist sentiment. This first appeared in the 1964 elections in a fairly solid rejection of the remnants of Mr. Pierre Trudeau's brand of federalism. In addition, a lot of federal money was poured into Quebec. Then there is the Meech Lake Accord, a controversial constitutional agreement that "brought Quebec into the constitution" (the Quebec provincial government had refused to accept Mr. Trudeau's version of a repatriated federal constitution). The Meech Lake Accord not only recognizes Quebec as "a separate and distinct society" (which it certainly is), but also in effect gives Quebec—and any other province—a veto over any future constitutional changes. This was supported by both opposition parties, but it was Mr. Mulroney's agreement.

In the heat of the debate over the trade deal, other issues were lost in the shuffle. In a very real sense, this is as it should be. The way that the trade deal develops and is defined will determine the shape of Canada's future, and possibly her very existence as a separate nation.

JORDAN BISHOP

Jordan Bishop teaches in the University College of Cape Breton, Sydney, Nova Scotia.

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J. Bryan Hehir

MIDDLE EAST DEAD END

TIME TO BACK OUT

There is an inevitable and urgently necessary debate ahead for the United States. The topic is the Middle East, more precisely the future direction of U.S. policy in the region. We have debated the Middle East often in this country, but events now force us back to first principles. Herewith an attempt to sketch the background to the new debate and to structure its questions.

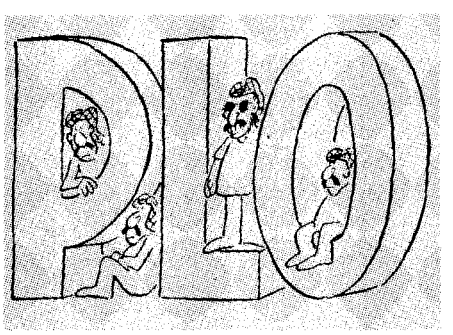
The debate is urgently needed because U.S. policy has been at a dead end for much of the 1980s. The debate is inevitable because all the other major parties to the Middle East conflict are staking out their positions. Each of them watches for U.S. initiatives or U.S. reactions to their moves, but none of them is waiting for the United States to set the pace of policy developments in the region.

The key actors who are structuring the Middle East question are the Israelis and the Palestinians. While the Middle East issue is larger and more complex than the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, no other piece of the problem is so centrally located or will be so influential in its outcome.

The Palestinian attempt to change the state of the question in the Middle East has had two phases. The first began unexpectedly in December 1987, the opening of the *intifada*, or the Palestinian uprising, in the West Bank and Gaza. The leaders of the *intifada* have not been the Palestinian leadership but the younger generation whose whole lives have been spent under Israeli occupation. There is good evidence that the PLO leadership has been playing catch-up with the dynamic of the *intifada*. This does not mean, however, that the young Palestinians in the occupied territories can be separated from the PLO. The picture is more complex: the indigenous leaders have their own legitimacy, but they have tied themselves by public choice to the political direction of the PLO.

This raises the second phase of Palestinian activity: the meeting of the Palestinian National Council (PNC) announced the establishment of a Palestinian state, essentially within the boundaries of the occupied territories, and simultaneously made its most forthcoming acceptance yet of UN Resolutions 242 and 338. The PNC's acceptance of 242 *seems* real and *is* ambiguous. Writing two months prior to the Algiers meeting, Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg expressed the view that the PNC "will go to the brink of accepting the existence of Israel in language that the hardliners both in the PLO and Israel will not be able to dismiss—but only to the brink."

The PNC declaration surely met Hertzberg's expectation, and I believe went beyond it. The inclusion of 242 in the text, by all indications, was purchased at the price of intense bargaining within the Palestinian leadership. The ambiguity in the statement arises from the joining of 242 with other UN resolutions that undercut or erode the force of 242: the acceptance of Israel's *de facto* and *de jure* legitimacy in the Middle East. If one takes into account the *context* of the Palestinian decision (getting ready for a new round of diplomacy in the Middle East) as well as the *content* of the Algiers declaration, I believe the exegesis of the text signals a shift in the Palestinian position.



Equally significant for the U.S. policy debate is the Israeli election. Here the signal is lucid but the clarity may be damaging. The staunchly pro-Israel *New Republic* commented that "There are many ways to interpret the Israeli election results but all of them are gloomy." The prospect of a Likud-religious right coalition government which would oppose both a "peace for territory" proposal and resist any discussion with the PLO presents a formidable obstacle, substantially and procedurally, to any Middle East peace initiative. The likely future in this case is a continuation of the *intifada* and a more violent Israeli response. Neither Palestinian ambiguity nor Israeli clarity is encouraging.

The prospect of diplomatic gridlock and escalating violence in the occupied territories forms the background of the U.S. policy debate predicted at the outset of this column. The Middle East question was absent from the presidential campaign; since this is not an issue normally handled with precision in political campaigns, its absence was a blessing. A more serious problem is the fact that the United States has been a marginal actor in the Middle East (save for the Persian Gulf) for much of the last six years.

The Bush administration does not begin as President Reagan did in 1981 with a Middle East diplomatic process underway. From the U.S. side there is a need to build from the ground up and to do so in light of the recent moves sketched above. As always there are hopes (and fears) in the Middle East about what the United States will do. It seems clear that continuing U.S. disengagement is not good for the region or for the United States. But what policy perspective will the U.S. bring to the problem? The answer to this question awaits the debate forecast above. Three component elements of the debate can be sketched.

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The most predictable aspect of U.S. policy in the Middle East is its support for Israel. The U.S determination to support the existence, defense, and well-being of Israel is beyond reasonable doubt. The debate will not be about these factors. At the same time it is clear that the tactics of Israel's response to the *intifada* have generated a dramatic debate within the American Jewish community and among the American public. The PNC declaration may move this debate from tactics to the substantive position of the Israeli government about future negotiations on the Middle East. If this more substantive debate emerges it will focus on a quote attributed to Henry Kissinger during his shuttle diplomacy, that the United States was committed to the defense of Israel's existence but not to its conquests. The centrality of this distinction for United States policy has grown since it was first made. It is one way to pose U.S. choices.

The most contested aspect of U.S. policy is precisely where it will stand on direct negotiations with the PLO. Here again Kissinger's legacy persists, for he made the commitment in 1974 that the U.S. would not deal with the PLO unless stringent conditions were met by them. The Algiers declaration had as its primary audience the U.S. government. The ambiguity of the PLO signal has been noted. The question is what the United States should do in the face of ambiguity. It may be helpful to remember an analogous instance during the Cuban missile crisis when Khrushchev sent a bellicose note and a diplomatic message to Kennedy within forty-eight hours. Kennedy reached for the diplomatic option and ignored the threatening note. As with all analogies the differences here predominate. But the lessons of the Cuban outcome may be helpful in addressing ambiguity. The very persistence of the PLO in the face of U.S. and Israeli attempts to ignore and delegitimize its existence should call for reconsideration of a policy that has left the negotiating process and the United States at a dead end for several years now. Secretary George Shultz's attempt to bar Yasir Arafat from speaking at the UN general assembly simply continues this misguided policy. □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

FAITHFUL CONFLICT

REJECTING CAMPBELL'S SOUP

I was reading Benedicta Ward's excellent translation of the sayings of the desert fathers, *The Desert Christians* (Macmillan, 1980), and came across a fascinating passage. Here it is:

Abba Olympius said this, "One of the pagan priests came down from Scetis one day and came to my cell and slept there. Having reflected on the monks' way of life, he said to me, 'Since you live like this, do you not receive any visions from your God?' I said to him, 'No.' Then the priest said to me, 'Yet when we make a sacrifice to our God, he hides nothing from us, but discloses his mysteries; and you, giving yourself so much hardship, vigils, prayer, and asceticism, say that you see nothing? Truly, if you see nothing, then it is because you have impure thoughts in your heart, which separate you from your God, and for this reason his mysteries are not revealed to you.' So I went to report the priest's words to the old men. They were filled with admiration and said this was true. For impure thoughts separated God from man."

There are several interesting things here. One of them involves the background of the desert fathers, the people (there were desert mothers too—I use the common term because "desert persons" really looks silly, and "fathers and mothers of the desert" too self-consciously nonsexist) who made up the early Christian monastic movement. It was initially a lay movement, and according to many historians it was also, at least in part, a reaction against the legalization of Christianity, an attempt to preserve its original nature in the face of a respectability which could dilute and distort it.

What is intriguing about this passage is that so much early Christian writing consists of polemics against paganism, and so much ancient non-Christian writing is equally polemical where Christianity is concerned. But here is a pagan priest, being received as a guest by a Christian monk, discussing religion with him in an obviously courteous, if pointed, way. The pagan priest evidently thought that he and the monk, Abba Olympius, had something in common, and perhaps believed that he might learn something; in any case, it can be inferred that Christianity and the lives of the monks made him curious. By the same token, the monk gives him a respectful listening, and his elders agree with what the pagan priest has said. This seems unusually courteous.

One explanation for this could be the fact that there were occasionally conflicting approaches to orthodoxy within early monasticism. On the one hand, St. Anthony the Great, the father of Christian monasticism, was a friend and ally of the very orthodox St. Athanasius. On the other hand, in some monasteries there was a more-or-less syncretistic approach to gnosticism and to such non-Christian traditions as Zoroastrianism, and this could be the sort of monastery the pagan priest was visiting. On the third hand (we have moved to another planet, now), the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, from which the story comes, is an orthodox work.

I think there is something important in this story which lies at a more basic level, and can teach something about the encounter between religious traditions in our own time. The monastic life was, among other things, an attempt to meet the living God, to know God as much as it was possible to know him. This quest for the vision of God and the revelation of his mysteries is not unorthodox. The reality at the heart of this desire is what orthodoxy proceeds from, but it transcends orthodoxy, insofar as orthodoxy means the articulation of what has hap-

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pened to men and women who have encountered the living God in revelation and prayer. In one sense Christian orthodoxy, in its purest, noncontentious sense, could be said to include even what lies beyond it, as the best poetry is surrounded by and points to silence. Truth finally cannot be said completely, and words point beyond themselves. When truth becomes a political commodity, a token in the game of argument, orthodoxy is defined more by what it stands against than by the mystery it points towards.

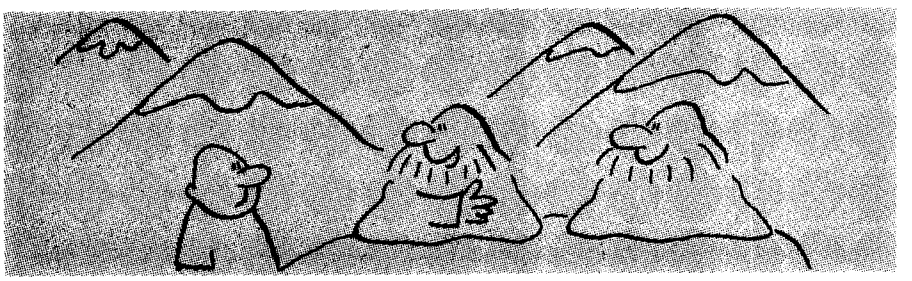
On the other hand, there are irreconcilable differences between some of the great religious traditions. Christians see an eternal affirmation of life—even the particular lives of individuals—in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Buddhism, on the other hand, believes the idea of any subsistent individual identity to be an illusion. Some of the Buddhist arguments are particularly pointed; so are some of the Christian ones. We can sharpen our appreciation for our own tradition in this encounter, and the more seriously and respectfully we consider the radical Buddhist alternative, the more we will understand the real nature of our own belief. This encounter may be fruitful; but the views of Christianity and Buddhism may never be reconciled on this point. There are places, however, where Buddhism is directly helpful to Christianity. No other religious tradition has dealt so minutely with the phenomenon of simple awareness, and it is remarkable how closely some Christian monastic works (for example, those of St. Maximus the Confessor) resemble Buddhist writing. Any Christian (or for that matter anyone from any religious tradition) could benefit from a reading of the late Chogyam Trungpa's *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* (Shambhala Press) which is, among other things, a clear-eyed critique of a very American approach to religion.

Perhaps the most difficult relationship between religious traditions is the one which exists between Christianity and Judaism. It is marked, among other things, by the history of Christian anti-Semitism. Anti-Semites have, for centuries, conveniently forgotten the facts of Jesus' Judaism, and the Jesus of sentimental religious art is frequently so Aryan it is hard for some people not to picture our redeemer as a Swede. Recent years have seen many changes for the better, but the strain continues. So do misunderstandings and misrepresentations on both sides. It is still not at all uncommon to hear Christian preachers speak of "what the Jews believed" (as if there were none left), and contrasts are frequently drawn between "the old law" and Jesus' teaching. While there certainly is a difference, the equation of the law in Jewish teaching with mere legalism is a grotesque distortion, and people inclined to make it would do well to read Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. I have heard Christian preachers suggest that the Jews failed to heed their own messianic prophecies when they rejected Jesus; but in fact the Messiah was to be a worldly leader, and the glory that accompanied his triumph was to be obvious. As one Jewish writer has put it, we live in a world which has obviously not been redeemed (Karl Barth, however, compared humanity's situation to that of an army which keeps fighting because it has not yet heard the news of the truce).

There is obviously one central point upon which the two traditions cannot be reconciled. On the point of Jesus' divinity, Christians believe Jews to be wrong. But if it is left at that, as if it were only a matter of getting the facts wrong, an important lesson is missed. Christians must try to understand, as sympathetically as they can, how dreadful and even blasphemous, how idolatrous the Christian claim must seem. If we are wrong about this we are wrong about something that matters infinitely. I do not believe we are—but our belief in Jesus' divinity must be held in fear and trembling, and we must understand that there are many who reject it, not blindly, but for the very best and most reverent of reasons.

There is an approach to religion which argues that all traditions are telling the same story in different ways; wisdom consists in seeing what is best and true in all of them, rejecting or at least minimizing particular allegiances. The late Joseph Campbell is probably the best-known exponent of this point of view, which has had ancient forms. Its most recent derives from Jung. It is seductive; I also think it is quite wrong. There is a real condescension in believing that we can see all of this, as it were, from above, as if we were capable of understanding from some uninvolved distance the essence of Judaism and Hinduism and Taoism, drawing from all the best and most important lessons.

While it is important to see what is shared (and C.S. Lewis's appendix to *The Abolition of Man* is a good beginning for those who don't believe in a common human wisdom-tradition), our differences matter greatly, perhaps even more than our similarities. Where we allow our allegiance to a tradition to become a club with which we can bash those who disagree, we have reduced the truth to something we hope to wield and manage to our own satisfaction. But where we try to live it and understand it more humbly, we can begin to see something of the point of the tale from the desert fathers. The pagan left Abba Olympius's cell a pagan, who had no doubt learned something from his visit with a Christian monk. The monks remained Christian, having learned something from a pagan. The point is that we can learn much more from compassionate and respectful disagreement than from smug and condescending agreement. □



"Yesterday I told you the meaning of human existence. Now, here's Goopta Kumar Subbhas Ji with an opposing view."

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AN ANTHROPOLOGY FOR CHRISTMAS

IN WHICH IS EXPLAINED THE MYSTERY OF GOODNESS

ROBERT G. HOYT

I know a woman—let's call her Helen—who will start planning for Christmas 1989 on December 25, 1988. In the hubbub of gift presentation, unwrapping, trying on, showing glee, giving thanks, she will be unobtrusively on the alert, observing givers and getters for clues about their tastes, unmet needs, unsatisfied yens. At some later point she will begin making lists; as the year wears on she will begin eyeing store windows and paging through catalogues. And next Christmas, like this Christmas, she will bring much pleasure to many people.

You may know other Helens; you may be a Helen yourself (though if you're as insightful about gift-giving as my Helen, you're a wonder). The question before the house this Christmas is: Why do some people behave this way?

Gifts are bait, says a proverb in several languages: they come with hooks attached. John Steinbeck said a gift is a bribe with bells. Thomas Hobbes nailed it down still tighter: "No man giveth, but with intention of good to himself; because gift is voluntary, and of all voluntary acts the object is to every man his own good."

That has the confident ring of an assumption turned into a dogma. For neoclassical thinkers in the social sciences, it is, indeed, a tenaciously held canon of faith, which together with other doctrinal presuppositions about human behavior offers an elegantly simple and "unsentimental" explanation of how the world really works, one that can be defended against all comers.

And, in fact, questioning the doctrine isn't easy. Given some access to our own inner maze, we know that sometimes (often? usually?) we offer gifts for less than noble motives: to assuage guilt, to *look* generous, curry favor, observe a ritual, sell a bill of goods, buy attention or affection, earn a return gift, keep peace in the family; and for darker purposes as well.

But "often" or "usually" won't do; the pure neoclassical faith posits that human beings are not *capable* of disinterested action: We are all specifications of the genus *homo economicus*, that radical individualist never distracted from the rational pursuit of personal interest by the temptations of love, honor, empathy, or conscience. Confronted with examples of seemingly generous acts, even deeds of hidden heroism, neoclassicists are adept at exposing the roots of such acts in self-interest. Even if doing good for others doesn't pay off in dollars or status or admiration or gratitude, maybe it makes you *feel* good: That's your secret, selfish "utility." If you sacrifice for others at the cost of suffering to yourself, it's because you're a masochist; that's how you get your kicks.

But does anyone really believe this? There may be Neoclassicals of the Strict Observance—practicing curmudgeons, unconverted Scrooges—who actually conform their lives and all their thoughts to the theory. But most of us, whether Tories, Whigs, or radicals, know that altruism is real. Without it, as Amitai Etzioni points out, we cannot explain the behavior of a mother who dashes into a burning building to try, against the odds and at great risk, to rescue her child. We don't think she is irrational but suprarational. We honor her, as Samuel and Pearl Oliner honor those Gentiles who risked their everything to rescue Jews in Nazi Europe (*The Altruistic Personality* [Free Press]; cf. *Commonweal*, July 18, p. 388). The rescuers were too few, but numerous enough to redefine our species. And acts like theirs are only particularly vivid instances of be-

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haviors that could not happen in the world of Thomas Hobbes but do take place in ours.

The trouble is, this theory with holes in it, which runs contrary to instinct, common sense, our experience, and (for many) our ideals, is still alive and operational. No society or polity perfectly embodies any theory, but the neoclassical "paradigm" is powerfully influential in ours. It helps account for much of the hard-nosed resistance to public policies based on equity or compassion; *viz.*, our grudging response to AIDS victims, the homeless, drug addicts, destitute nations trapped in debt. Outside economics, it helps explain why, in the Me Decade, many therapists automatically equate mental health with self-seeking and try to win other-serving clients from their aberration. In electoral politics, the real power of the paradigm is multiplied by a presumption that it is too pervasive, too closely identified with the "American way," the "free market," and with "democratic capitalism" as the antithesis of demonic Communism, to be challenged: It was late in the 1988 campaign before Michael Dukakis was willing to come across as a true nonbeliever.

Why is it so powerful? I suspect that proclaiming self-interest as the dominant or only motivator of human behavior serves the self-interest of the proclaimers. Amitai Etzioni argues, more charitably, that while the neoclassical paradigm has numerous and fierce critics, it has few robust rivals *as theory*: Not Communism, not "socialism with a human face," not the theories of the Greens. And you can't beat somethin' with nothin'.

Etzioni, a sort of polymath among social scientists, devotes his latest book, *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics* (Free Press), to filling the theory gap through the creation of a new, non-Marxist, "deontological" paradigm, the "I & We" paradigm, a.k.a. "socio-economics." In bare-bones abstract, it says that self-interest matters greatly but doesn't begin to account for all human behavior; we are moved by "normative/affective" factors as well as "rational/empirical" considerations; and we don't dwell in the world as atomistic individuals but rather as members of collectivities in a setting of code and culture. To borrow from Etzioni's own final-sentence summation, the aim of "socio-economics," or the "I/We paradigm," is to replace a theory and morality "entirely focused on self" with one that enfolds the pursuit of self-interest within "the broader context of human nature, society, and ultimate values."

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I wish him luck with his peers. If enough of them are persuaded, the dust jacket blurbs ("a seminal work," "may be the most important book of the year") will turn out to be faint praise. *The Wealth of Nations*, which *The Moral Dimension* would displace, was not merely the Big Book of 1776.

But while Etzioni does a lot to put self-interest in its place, for me he does little if anything to explain or advance its opposite; call it disinterestedness, *agape*, *caritas*, love. Neither does he say which values are "ultimate," or where they came from. There is a theory around, not usually discussed in economics texts, that does better. It says that human beings can perceive the true, the good, the beautiful in objects or persons outside themselves, and are drawn to them. They don't project goodness onto reality but discover it. This capacity can be strengthened or distorted or abandoned, but we all have it as a birthright, and it makes us able to love things and other people for their own sake, not for what we get out of them—sometimes, or usually, or often; in some part, or in large part, or totally.

One reason I like this theory is that it explains to my satisfaction the behavior of people like Helen. Some gifts do indeed come from the heart. When gifts reflect the givers' insight into tastes and preferences not their own, something is at work that is not self- but other-oriented. If the giving gives pleasure to the giver, the pleasure is different *in category* from the pleasure of satisfying self.

Now, what explains our power to love and our willingness to give? Not believing in goodness, Thomas Hobbes didn't have to explain it. But there it is around us; rather more mysterious, to my mind, than the existence of evil. Experimental evidence is hard to come by, but a hypothesis exists: We are able to perpetrate goodness for the same reason we can perceive the beauty of sunsets and butterflies: We are made in the image of God. As anthropology, this explanation compares well with the axioms of neoclassical theory. It's older, simpler, more encompassing of reality, and far more elegant.

Goodness, along with imitations and approximations of goodness, is particularly rife at Christmas. Some of this, of course, is the result of cultural hangover; even people who will act with extraordinary generosity this month may not reflect on how appropriate it is to act this way in this season. But reflection is in order.

The first Christmas gift, the Incarnation, was neither bait nor bribe. It was not the product of cost/benefit analysis. The Giver did not weigh the investment to be made against the utility to be gained. It was just an incredibly Good thing to do. It set an example which, when followed, may not appear to make for sound economics but works out well from the perspective of people who are left out of other systems; for example, the lepers of Molokai. Applied more broadly, even if imperfectly, Christmas as paradigm would change the odds for homeless people, the sick and friendless, debtor nations, fractured families....We should maybe give it another try. □

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Anne Porter
HERE ON EARTH

The old man living
In his rented room
Grows lonely as the night comes on
Especially in winter

And the boy shooting drugs
On the tenement roof
Is lonely whether or not
He has companions

Lovers lie sleeping
Side by side
A wilderness between them

And their unborn infant
Is already alone
So soon to be discarded
Even as he begins
Unfolding in the womb
Of his lonely mother

Because the scatterer
Has overtaken us
Betraying promises
Estranging lovers

Tearing us inwardly
And tearing us apart
One from another

And this is why
Those of us who are sated
Find it so easy to ignore
Those of us who are starving

And why we have been known
To torture one another
Why there are times
When we are far more cruel
Than the animals.

Nevertheless
Taken all together
Or one by one
We are the holiest
Of all earth's creatures

For he who kindled
The fire of the sun
He who draws out the tender leaves
From the dark twigs of winter
He who has whittled
A cabin for the snail

Has also carved our names
In the palm of his hand

And he became a child
The better to be near us
Born in the winter-time
Born on a journey

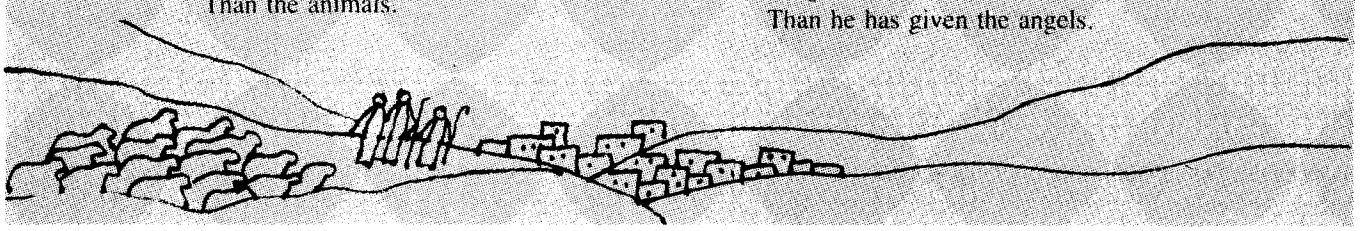
He grew to be a man
And lived among us

He was our healing
When we were sick
Our bread
At all our weddings

He suffered at our hands
And he forgave us
He sweat from head to foot
With human anguish
And shedding every drop of blood
To give us to each other

He gave himself to us
That we might live forever

He gave us even more
Than he has given the angels.



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SCREEN

ICE & FIRE

'PELLE' & 'WOMEN ON THE VERGE'

Pelle the Conqueror, winner of the 1988 Cannes Festival Palme D'Or, is an old-fashioned, classically made film that risks boredom for the sake of conveying a deep richness. Its center is Max von Sydow, roughhewn and red-faced, as a weak, aging Swedish immigrant struggling to make a new life as a farmhand in nineteenth-century Denmark. There he endures prejudice and hard labor on an estate owned by a philanderer and managed by cruel taskmasters. The pathetic desire of this former mountain of a man is simply "coffee in bed on Sunday mornings."

Pelle, his son (Pelle Hvenegaard), is a spirited lad who has to make his way in this harsh world, fully loved but hardly protected. The emotional force of the movie is sporadically intense—a result of moving back and forth from identification either with the father's consciousness of failure or the son's brave dreams. This double-jointed sympathy is diluted by a screenplay that, faithful to a novel by Danish writer Martin Anderson Nexo, sometimes contains too many tangents.

Like *Babette's Feast*, another Danish production, *Pelle the Conqueror*'s photographic style is at once stern and splendid. The farm is set in a cold, but beautiful setting of wide fields surrounded by desolate forests and a forbidding coast. Beginning with the first scene Director Bille August also employs evocative shots of ships coming in and out of ocean mists, as if from a Nordic seascape by the Romantic master Friedrich. These shots, symbolic but not heavy-handed, become the stuff of Pelle's dreams of flight—as a hearty farmhand worker who becomes Pelle's father-substitute tells him—to "the real world, America, China, negroland." August also photographs a blonde, blue-eyed Danish girl (Kristina Tornqvists) wrapped in blue-and-white neckerchiefs and scarfs that make her natural frailty seem more delicate.

Despite the beauty, the film often feels diffuse, especially when other subplots involving tensions between the estate owner and his alcoholic wife, and the bestial life of one of his illegitimate sons who cowherds nearby are drawn into the film. The secondary characters are sketched with swift precision; but, lumped together, they sometimes disperse the feel of the film.

Pelle has been compared to long novels by Dickens, what Henry James snooted at as "loose, baggy monsters." There is some truth to the comparison and the charge. Like a Dickens novel, *Pelle* seems to have an unfocused middle; it also brings its multiple subplots to a grand, climactic narrative closure. Strongly acted, exquisitely shot, *Pelle* is a powerful ode to time and the north wind, which you almost feel blowing through the screen.

Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown shines as one of the best comedies of 1988. Spanish Director Pedro Almodovar, who also wrote the screenplay, here concocts a stylish highbrow farce made up of an odd collection of eccentrics: a middle-aged womanizer, his wife, his most recent mistress, his brand new mistress, his son, his son's fiancée, and a girlfriend of mistress number one who falls straight from the arms of an amorous terrorist into the lap of the already engaged son. Toss in several pistols, the police, some ducks (pets of one of the characters), then add gazpacho (laced with a dose of sleeping pills). The result? A deliciously absurd comedy of errors.

Besides the fine screenplay, the film has a strong cast and production design. The lead is Carmen Maura, who plays the first mistress, assertive, mature, thirtyish, but still prancing about in tight skirts and desperate enough over her desertion to try anything. The plot of the film covers the day she is jilted and stays pretty much in her penthouse apartment where everyone sooner or later shows up, spinning off little chain reactions of mock-disasters and mini-explosions.

Maura's face matches Almodovar's pace: she's so deadpan, almost lazy, you never expect her next absurd caper. At first, Almodovar is slow at developing the story, but a hint of the bizarre humor to come occurs early, when Maura, depressed, watches herself on a TV commercial. She is supposed to work as a TV actress famous throughout Spain as "the mother of the killer" on a ludicrous pop serial. In the ad, she attests to the power of some new detergent. "As the 'mother of the killer' I can tell you, nothing gets clothes whiter," she says, then holds up some bloodstained shirts. A moment later, they are sparkling clean. It's a gorgeous little piece of blackly humorous mock-heroic, a tone that dominates the entire film.

Maybe Almodovar's humor should be termed red, not black. The color is a strong key for the film—not only with bloodstained shirts, but glitzy bright appliances such as Maura's ominous red telephone that she waits by, hoping for a last call from her lover. Her skirts are always red, and so too that potent gazpacho. Scarlet dominates, perhaps for symbolic purposes. But Almodovar avoids a one-note repetition by using other strong visuals. A wildly carpeted and outfitted taxi keeps showing up, and characters keep wandering to the edge of Maura's airy terrace, which literalizes the "verge" between their rational and irrational behavior. On the other hand, the penthouse view also supplements the high-spirited giddiness that results when every possible catastrophe is narrowly evaded.

Timing is all in such affairs, and Almodovar provides it with plausible but uproarious misdirections, accidents, and coincidences. Despite his comic view of female jealousy, he also provides sympathy for the women, satire on machismo, and even a "feminist" end—though the word itself is exploited for one of his best laughs. The film was awarded best screenplay at the 1988 Venice Film Festival; surely few films since *Tootsie* have blended such art, insight into the sexes, and engaging silliness.

TOM O'BRIEN

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STAGE

LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE

CRAIG LUCAS'S 'RECKLESS'

At the beginning of Craig Lucas's *Reckless*, Rachel is having one of her "euphoria attacks," as she says, babbling away about Christmas, snow, Santa Claus, Alaska—a pattern of images that conveys domestic coziness—and her husband Tom responds by pulling away from her words, her touch. Later in the play, we learn that she was thinking not about what she was saying—she seldom does—but of the puppy she never had as a child, and will not receive this Christmas as a wife and mother, and about scratching its imaginary ears. Tom's distress is not at her relentless chatter—at least not immediately—but at his having taken out a contract on her life, an apparently irrevocable act that he now regrets. "Do you think we ever really know people?" she asks Lloyd, the man who rescues her in the snow. They play, in typical Lucas fashion, with *really* and *know* and come to no conclusion. He is finally ready to answer her question when the play is nearly over, but she will not listen until he eats, which he refuses to do since he is drinking himself to death on champagne; instead of an answer, we get a teasing attempt to feed him which dances lightly over what is an essentially scary scene.

Reckless is something of a problem for me. It was so well received that the Circle Repertory's customary limited run had to be extended, but I have the impression that audiences are responding only to the funny surface of the play. What's more, I am reluctant to go beneath that surface for fear I will founder in a morass of contemporary platitudes about the difficulties of surviving in an accidental universe. The Circle Rep production feeds those doubts. Although Robin Bartlett's Rachel is able to add an undertone of hysteria to her optimistic chatter before one disaster too many makes her speechless, the character is not that different from the other cartoon figures who people the stage. After Rachel goes out over the roof in her slippers and housecoat, she encounters, primarily as an observer, murder, theft, self-induced starvation—terror played as farce, kept in comic perspective by her constant adjustment to new situations. "These things happen for a reason, I keep saying it."

Aside from the ludicrous calamities that befall the central characters ("Life's been reckless with these people," says a doctor in the shelter scene), Lucas offers television parody and psychiatrist jokes. He may intend the roles that Rachel and her friends assume in the game show to parallel shifting identities in the play as a whole and to make some point about on-screen/off-screen realities (Rachel comforts a crying Tom, "It's just the news, come on, it's not real"). But the TV scenes are as obvious as the kind of parody television does of itself. The

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string of therapists—none of whom can help Rachel, of course—derives its substance only from its place in the long line of comic analysts who have appeared in American plays and movies since the 1920s.

In the second act, Rachel loses her often reiterated belief that there is purpose in the events she has been a part of and concludes, "Things just happen!" In the scene that follows, Lloyd dies and she goes silent. In the last scene, which is played in a very different tone from the rest of the play, she is speaking again, as a therapist herself now, and her patient is Tom, Jr., whom she has not seen since her precipitous exit into the snow. Now grown, haunted by the disappearance of his mother, the death of his father, his brother's apparent madness, he needs help at Christmas (most of the violent events in the play take place at Christmas) and he finds it in this doctor who somehow reminds him of his mother. "I'm sorry I kept you waiting," she says as he exits. She speaks as the doctor, apologizing to the patient for his having had to sit a while in the waiting room, but the line belongs to the mother who has made the son wait twenty years. What are we to make of that last line? A sentimental coda to a farcical horror story? A last joke in a play in which therapy is useless and Rachel's gestures of amiable succor regularly lead to disaster? Neither reading is quite satisfactory.

On the surface, Lucas's play suggests the work of playwrights as different as Durang, Albert Innaurato, and John Guare, all of whom write farces that deal glancingly with the dark side of contemporary life. For me, however, their work seems not to go through laughter to pain but to become a defense against it, revelation as denial. They do not play games at graveside, as Samuel Beckett does; they just play games. *Reckless* seemed to do much the same thing at Circle Rep. I laughed at it (perhaps with it) and admired Lucas's talent for oblique dialogue, and I found myself wondering if it might be played so that all those allusions to identity, self-knowledge, rationality would seem neither gratuitous nor portentous by letting the characters escape caricature. Even so, there might be trouble with that last scene. I doubt that Rachel could ever be a Camus/Sartre existentialist, accepting the absurdity of existence, and choosing to create herself despite that frightening knowledge. I prefer an uglier last scene. If we have been given glimpses of the chaos beneath the comic horrors and Rachel's Pollyanna gloss on them, the final scene could be played with great force as a positive scene that does not recognize that it confirms the negation. That is not *Reckless* at the Circle Rep, and it may not even be *Reckless* as Lucas wrote it.

The day after I saw *Reckless*, I went to see a preview of the new production of *The Devil's Disciple* at the Circle in the Square. It is a conventional reading of the play, nicely but not excitingly staged. Shaw always pleases me, but there was a special piquancy this time in seeing a play in which choices make a difference to the individual and to society. *Reckless* may be closer to where we live today, but, after sampling it, you might find it rewarding to take a vacation from the slapstick malaise represented by so many plays, movies, and presidential campaigns and take a taste of Shaw.

GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

Blithely self-centered, if not mean-spirited

THE GREAT DIVIDE
Second Thoughts on the American Dream
Studs Terkel
Pantheon Books, $18.95, 439 pp.

Paul Baumann

This is the book Jeane Kirkpatrick and her pettish cadre of blame-the-blame-America-firsters have been waiting for.

Who dares to question America's exceptionalism? Our restored status as a uniquely blessed people? That old warhorse Studs Terkel, that's who. Terkel, whose *The Good War* won a Pulitzer Prize, has the cauliflowered ear of a Christmas eve confessor and the great good soul of a man who likes his politics partisan, his conversation candid, and his patriotism with dirt under its fingernails. In *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream*, he has put together another varied collection of Americans talking about themselves and their neighbors. As George Herbert Bush is wont to say, the people have spoken. Alas, how dreary we often sound.

What has the American Dream become? A glorious indulgence for some, a grievous insult to others. If this is news, it is old news. Still, it's one thing to nod sagely about "economic restructuring," another to hear the voices of those undergoing the painful metamorphosis.

As Terkel acknowledges in a rambling sixteen-page introduction, the America he found this time out is more somber than the one reported on in his earlier books. He talks with bankrupt farmers, incipient Nazis, unemployed blue-collar workers, every kind of minister and believer, and with a passel of the uneducated and virtually inarticulate young destined for the economic oblivion of the "service industry." Where Terkel

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moves among the poor and working class, schools don't teach, streets aren't safe, the rich get richer, and everybody else watches TV.

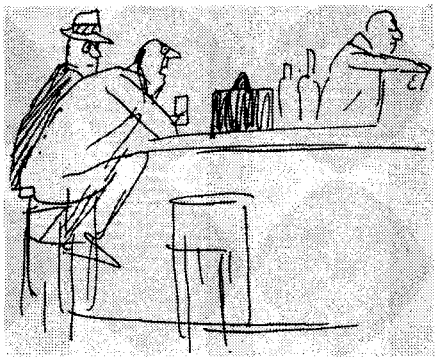
In an unapologetically anecdotal fashion, *The Great Divide* purports to document the disorder wrought by Reaganomics and our return to "traditional values." Values like money. As one self-described Wall Street robber baron puts it while outlining the monastic exertions (marriage is frowned upon) expected from the young, sixty-hour-a-week futures trader, "Everybody must adjust to the marketplace."

Talk about the occasion of sin.

Terkel, who hosts a radio talk show in Chicago when he's not chronicling the class struggle, finds a blithely self-centered, if not mean-spirited country out there. Bruce Bendinger, ad man and former political operative for Gerald Ford, doesn't hesitate to speak of blame. "So many other values have diminished: patriotism, religion, family. All that is really left is money. It is the way you keep score. It's one of the few values that survives."

Personal ambition has run amuck, Terkel's correspondents report, and the widening chasm between races, between rich and poor, young and old, worker and manager threatens to swallow up the noble American Dream of a common civic life where the equality of men was thought to be not wishful thinking but actually edifying. Terkel wants to remind us that citizens, not entrepreneurs, build democracies.

The "great divide"—a term borrowed from *Chicago Tribune* columnist Clarence Page—is not a pleasant sight or sound. All of Terkel's off-stage coaxing fails to soften the picture. (And, to be honest, the deification of the oppressed is often cloying.) He detects the stirrings of something bold and common-sensical and redemptive in isolated acts of witness and resistance, where the meek have taken on the "Big Boys." One of the book's heroes is Jean Gump, a grandmother and antiwar activist currently imprisoned for a 1986 Plowshares action. Terkel celebrates her civil disobedience as an act of democratic participation, part of a too-easily-forgotten legacy of concern for the common good that is as American as the invasion of Grenada.



"I used to be a gentleman and a scholar, but there was no money in it."

At seventy-six Terkel has lived through more harrowing political catastrophes than Ronald Reagan's charisma or the ascendancy of the yuppie. He has earned the right to be optimistic. But what he hopes for—that "what we profess to believe in this drifting decade may be something wholly different from what we really believe"—isn't readily evident in the ninety-odd testimonies gathered here. His vision of a vibrant subterranean coalition of truth-seekers, trade unionists, the poor, and the ignored seems nostalgic at best.

Idle sociological speculation, a kind of latent Eric Sevareidism, clutters the remarks of many of those interviewed. There are few surprises, and the laughs, when they come, are mostly unintended. Barbara Brandon, Ayn Rand's hagiographer, gives breathless witness to the solipsism Rand passed off as philosophy. Rand even railed against the sentimental populism of Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, outraged over the immorality of Jimmy Stewart issuing uncollateralized loans. Now that's a fastidious woman. What she thought of men's rightful superiority to women would bring a tear to Archie Bunker's eye.

There's the "dentist-entrepreneur," with his chain of dental parlors, his bizarre spittoon collection and quirky license plates (CUSPID, etc.). A unionized caterer who specializes in a meals-on-wheels program for strikebreakers. The unmistakable contemporary voice—the white noise—of the Chicago disc jockey who speaks with a boisterous inanity of "the ying and yang thing." An ingenuous and overachieving Indiana CPA who volunteers for combat against the Sandinistas because "I have a responsibility to my mom and my sister and the girls I go out with. I have to protect the people I love."

Who dares blame America first now?

Sugar Rautbord, a Chicago socialite—the indispensable Sarah Lawrence graduate—and a housewife named Connie compete in the Miss Congeniality category. Miss Rautbord speaks of President Reagan as the man who "stopped a speeding bullet." She throws fundraisers for Ollie North and likes to say "something entertaining" to brighten the day of the homeless people she steps over in the streets.

Connie is a member of the Willow Creek Church, a suburban nondenominational outfit ministering to the Chicago Bears and the spiritually needy two-BMW family. Connie's sense of assurance is as inviolable as the local zoning laws. "Since I became a Christian, I don't worry about the Bomb," she says. "It's in God's hands." Or Dan Quayle's, Connie.

Terkel is astonished at how fragile historical memory has become, especially among the young. Calling the widespread amnesia about the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam, and other detours on the road to Disneyland a "collective Alzheimer's Disease," he worries that American concerns have become so foreshortened we can't read our own names for the designer labels. Without a sense of social and historical rootedness, Terkel suggests, we are incapable of sustaining a humane vision of the future. "It is the cleft that has cut us off," he writes, "one from the other and, indeed, from our very selves."

Minneapolis police chief Anthony Bouza, who barks like the New York City cop he once was, makes the summation for the prosecution. "There's a major shift in American values, between the haves and the have-nots, the rich and the poor. We now speak of an underclass. We are screwing the poor people. The family is disintegrating. The divorce rate has tripled. The drug culture among the young is growing. Television is fucking

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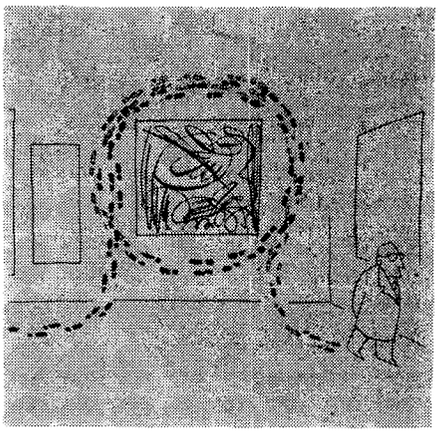
up the country completely, making us more violent and more druggy. . . . What are they telling us to do? Consume, look after number one, pamper yourself."

Bouza, as gallant as he is outspoken, is a piece of work.

What this all amounts to is a familiar and discouraging story. Indeed, impatience grows reading *The Great Divide*. Even if one agrees with the implied diagnosis, the presumed cure seems meager, even dull. (And what if the fault is not in one's Republican neighbors but in oneself? But that is another book review.)

The Great Divide will depress you, and bore you, and may even wear you out. But it's no lie. Looking for the soul of a great nation, Terkel finds us clasping to our hearts the blasphemous notion of the "self-made" man, the business-school mystique of the autonomous individual. A nation of resolute strivers, we never tire of proclaiming our individuality as we all scurry toward the same narrow turnstile. With the blind devotion alchemists had for lead, we peddle the base metal of self-interest thinking that by some miracle it will turn into the common good. Yet the sovereignty we so piously surrender to the grasping self is the very thing defeating us.

G.K. Chesterton's first principle of democracy—"that the things common to all men are more important than the things peculiar to any man"—comes to mind. Who can doubt but that this worship of the peculiar divides us now. □



TRUTH TELLING

THE TRUTH ABOUT LORIN JONES
Alison Lurie
Little Brown, $18.95, 328 pp.

Barbara A. Bannon

One thing is certain about Alison Lurie's novels. They always entertain. Although *The Truth about Lorin Jones* is not up to the high standards set by Lurie herself in *The War Between the Tates* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Foreign Affairs*, it is quirky, zesty, and funny enough to give enjoyment and amusement to its readers, most of whom will undoubtedly be women.

It is also both sly and sardonic in its satirization of lesbianism. A very polite form is shown here—no graphic physical details are given, only a kind of cozy cuddling, but the intense intolerance some lesbians feel for heterosexuals is made very clear. While this may antagonize some readers, it will ring true to others.

When first we meet Polly Alter she is thirty-nine, divorced, raising a teen-aged son she adores, but who is now off staying with his father. She "used to like men, but she didn't trust them any more or have very much to do with them." Just what has turned her off them, apart from her contempt for her quickly remarried ex-husband, she doesn't quite know, but is trying to figure out herself.

What most fascinates Polly at the moment, however, is the museum grant she has received to write a book on a now dead American woman painter, Lorin Jones, whose work she admires greatly and with whom she is going to feel a closer and closer sense of personal identification as her research goes on.

Lurie gives us a kind of psychological mystery story as she forces Polly to begin to come to terms with not only the confusions and contradictions in her own life but those she is increasingly encountering in that of Lorin Jones.

Along the way Lurie is constantly reintroducing us to characters we have met in some of her earlier novels, including the ambiguous Lorin Jones herself, but don't worry if you haven't encountered them before.

This, after all, is "the truth about Lorin Jones" and by the time you finish it everything you thought you knew about Lorin, her family, and friends will have changed drastically, maybe even turned upside down.

Alison Lurie is at her best in her exploration of not only the relations between women and women, but women and men. Since Polly no longer likes men (she thinks) she decides to give sex with other women a try.

It doesn't really work for her, but one of the funniest scenes comes when, discovering her bed invaded by a very large, lecherous, and drunken man, she simply announces "I'm a lesbian." It's a device other women faced with the same predicament might keep in mind. The man exits immediately and is very kind to Polly the next morning.

There is one male figure in Lorin Jones's life about whom Polly keeps hearing from the people she interviews in and out of the art world—Hugh Cameron. And as Polly is likely to do with anyone unknown to her except by rumor, she starts building up a picture of the man as an evil demon responsible for all the problems in Lorin's life. Well—maybe.

It is here, as Polly finally begins to see the truth about not only Lorin Jones but herself, that *The Truth about Lorin Jones* takes on a touch of an elegant soap opera. A most engaging middle-aged Key West, Florida man, with no apparent artistic aspirations in life and who has loved both women, brings Polly to her senses and persuades her that she is *not* a lesbian.

Still, one is left with a curious question in mind. Considering Lurie's reputation, this novel has received little review attention, pro or con. Could her devastating satirization of a certain kind of strident lesbianism have anything to do with that? It is an intriguing possibility. □

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THE EMBRYO'S CONTINGENT FUTURE

SCIENCE AND THE UNBORN
Choosing Human Futures
Clifford Grobstein
Basic, $18.95, 224 pp.

Thomas A. Shannon

In this book, Clifford Grobstein, emeritus professor of biology and public policy at the University of California (San Diego), makes another of his frequent and valuable contributions to the debate over the public-policy implications of technological developments; it is a model of a calm, reasoned, and comprehensive approach to an exceptionally difficult problem: the status of the human embryo.

Grobstein brings to bear his resources as a biologist and provides an overview of the best contemporary information on the development of the human embryo. Most remarkably, he does this in language that will be understandable to a rather wide audience. While not all sections are equally accessible, in general the book is directed at those who want to learn about current developments in embryology and are willing to expend some intellectual energy. The information in the chapters is complemented by a comprehensive series of appendices and charts that provide more detail. Thus the book is extremely valuable as an introduction to modern embryology.

But the book is much more than that, for in this biological context, Grobstein discusses and makes claims about the status of the human embryo. Thus the other significant dimension of the book is his discussion of the implications of biological development for public policy. Grobstein wrestles with the difficult question: Given what we know of the human embryo developmentally, what can we claim about its status and, therefore, what might responsible public policy look like?

Such status claims are important, for, as Grobstein notes, "status confers rights protective of the interests of individual members." The particular problem posed by the embryo is not only that it is an enigma in its own right. It is also a "rapidly moving target"; that is, it is in a rapidly developing state, with different biological features present in each. Although we know what the eventual outcome will be, exactly what the embryo *is* at each state is conditional, in Grobstein's judgment, on its capacities at that level. Thus developmental status is critical for Grobstein in discussing status.

For example, "the nature of a single human cell cannot be confused scientifically with the very different entity that is the far more highly organized newborn." Therefore, Grobstein can conclude that "based on its scientifically established nature, the pre-embryo does not rationally *require* the same status as a newborn with respect, for example, to assured continuance of its yet quite limited individuality" (emphasis in the original). What that scientifically defined nature is

REVIEWERS

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"It seems they got lost in the translation."

and how it is established scientifically are problems not fully resolved by Grobstein.

There are three features of this work that are especially valuable. First, as already noted, is the superb overview of contemporary embryology. Readers will have a deeper appreciation of the marvel of fertilization and consequent fetal development after reading this book. Second is Grobstein's appreciation of the reality he is discussing: "the embryo is alive, human, genetically individual, and with the potential to become a future person in the full sense." Grobstein does not deny biological reality in the interest of ideology. Third, he takes seriously the reality of the developmental nature of the embryo—with respect to what one can and cannot say about it at a given stage—and also considers seriously the implications of that for policy.

Yet not all will be happy with his conclusions. For example, "it would be premature to grant rights as a person to an entity so incomplete as an embryo." Such a conclusion follows from his biological developmental methodology, but it is unclear why this is philosophically correct. While explicitly recognizing that scientific facts cannot dictate policy, Grobstein seems to infer philosophical statements from such facts and comes very close to letting them set policy. Thus, "pre-embryos are not persons," but they have "substantial values." Such statements, I submit, are not those of a biologist. Also, "potential, therefore, is not to be equated with a current existence but with a contingent future." True enough, but the question is, potential for what? How is the contingency of the potentiality understood, and philosophically might not such potential also run in reverse and possibly require modification of the policy Grobstein suggests with respect to pre-embryos?

I feel a bit awkward about making such criticisms, for Grobstein presents an exceptionally responsible and even conservative view of the status of the fetus. Grobstein himself recognizes this could lead to some qualifications of the availability and timing of abortions. Yet, he also argues for the possibility of research on fetuses as well as the use of their tissues. The argument is cast and developed clearly and logically; nonetheless, I do not think the data quite secure the claims. Thus, when Grobstein says, "pre-embryos are not persons in the usual sense of the term," he may well be correct biologically, but is he correct philosophically? And that is the nub of the problem running through the whole book: Whence actually comes the status Grobstein accords the fetus in its various phases of development? That is the unexplained philosophical problem in the text, especially when the author relies on experimental data to secure these claims.

To express this discomfort—and I think the issue is a fairly substantive one—is not to dissent from the conclusions of the book, especially the high status accorded to the fetus that is the basis of a quite responsible public-policy proposal for the treatment of the fetus. Grobstein seriously engages the biological realities of the developing embryo, uses these data to discriminate among the various stages, and carefully considers how one might regard such an entity and what consequent public policy might be. Grobstein's approach prohibits any cavalier dismissal of the developing human embryo, but allows the responsible use of such entities in research. □

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THE SWEET CHARIOT SWINGS LOW

SPARE DAYS
Marvin Barrett
Arbor House/William Morrow,
$16.95, 200 pp.

Paul Wilkes

Marvin Barrett's path to spiritual wholeness had indeed been a rocky—but fascinating—one. He left the Navy in World War II as a conscientious objector to live in Gerald Heard's Trabuco community with the likes of Aldous Huxley; he asked Krishnamurti for guidance and participated in Gurdjieff groups. He traveled to visit holy men of India and to Assisi to experience the world of Francis. He distributed food with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity on their Grand Central Station rounds and regularly attended Episcopal services. While his interior life was stormy, outwardly he seemed to be doing just fine: well-married, well-employed, the father of four children and a coveted guest at the fanciest of dinner parties in New York's posh Hamptons.

But when, at the age of sixty-three, he faced a life-threatening cancer of the stomach—which doubly surprised him for its audacity, as he was already the victim of a heart attack—he looked squarely at himself and, regardless of what his résumé or friends might say, found he was "boring and ill-used." Mr. Barrett kept a diary of the six months in which he faced death, but more importantly, faced life.

The faith he had struggled to nurture did not, as he might have hoped, immediately infuse him in those trying days before and after his surgery. He was haunted by what Gerald Heard told him as Barrett sorrowfully left the Trabuco community (having been converted "from Ivy League skepticism to post-Bloomsbury piety"): that he would go into the world, forget the religious life and then, in old age, find it ten times as hard to reconstitute.

Spare Days offers no easy answers, no apocalyptic vision; Barrett is too intelligent, wry, and analytical for that. But it shows that a lifetime of faith, regardless how variegated, does indeed stand a soul in good stead for the great trials.

Mr. Barrett's description of his "death" (which was excerpted in the *New Yorker*), is classic—in a strange way, a wonderful advertisement for not being alarmed when the Sweet Chariot swings low for each of us. "A green slope: not slippery, not furry—like sealskin— irregular, but not bumpy. Slipping but not grabbing to hold on....No one on the bank cheering me on. Me alone. I am doing as I should. Letting go. Relaxed....No question of turning back, getting off. Then all of a sudden the delicious ride is over, the friendly green blinks out. The rattling and shaking, the dull roar, the low murmuring voices are back. I have returned."

He was resuscitated from this, his second heart attack, which occurred after the cancer operation, and dismisses it with: "The heart was obviously jealous of all the attention my cancerous stomach had been getting."

That is the tone of his book, at once self-conscious (as a writer must be) and self-deprecating. At once admitting his human frailties and cleaving to that strong, but patchwork faith he had woven and assembled in his lifetime.

At the end of his book, we find him "lying, not in a puddle of blood, or water, or a dirt-lined hole, but in that lukewarm funny soup that God brewed a billion years ago, waiting to be born. Again."

Here is a testament to faith. And to humor. Spiced with shrewd and dazzling insights, Mr. Barrett's funny soup is a treat for the rest of us as we struggle through our spare days. □

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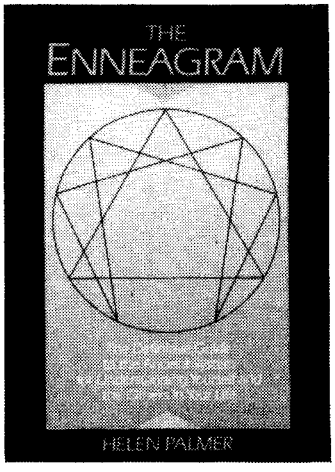

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His story in history

Lawrence S. Cunningham

A hundred years ago, the German scholar Adolph Julicher argued, in a pioneering work, that the Gospel parables were not to be read as elaborate allegories but as narratives with a sharp rhetorical point. In the past generation, building on Julicher's pioneering work, very fine scholars have used the tools of both exegesis and literary theory to expand and elaborate on his insight. John Donahue both summarizes the fruits of that intense study and adds fresh comments that not only help us to read the parables in the synoptic Gospels with intelligence but—and this is a singular merit of the work—demonstrates their usefulness in the preaching, and the living out, of their message. This book exudes profound scholarship, worn lightly, as well as a readability that is not always common in the world of scriptural studies.

The Gospel in Parable: Metaphor, Narrative, and Theology in the Synoptic Gospels, *by John R. Donahue, S.J., Fortress, $19.95, 254 pp.*

Donahue advises his readers to work through this book with Bible in hand. Following his advice, I found it also useful to keep a Gospel parallels handy to uncover fully the range of possibilities that he offers us in this study. The work has an introductory section on parables in themselves and the ways to study them; a middle section which treats each of the parables in the synoptic tradition; and a concluding section summarizing the whole. In that final section, Donahue brings alive Paul Ricoeur's argument that the parable is, in terms of narrative structure, the Gospel narrative writ small and vice versa; hence the title of a book which is, in my estimation, an exemplary study of the teaching of Jesus in parables in particular and the New Testament in general. Non-experts will also appreciate his concern to show how the fruits of his study might be applicable to the contemporary scene. There is, in short, a keen pastoral edge to his work which nicely complements careful scholarship.

Robert Krieg's book, a volume in the esteemed Paulist series *Theological Inquiries*, also concerns itself with narrative theory. His book is not one of exegesis but of systematic theology in dialogue with the researches of both biblical scholars and other theologians. He is concerned to distinguish narrative (a recital of events) from both *mythos* and biography and, with that distinction in hand, to engage the Christologies of representative theologians, preeminently, Walter Kasper, Edward Schillebeeckx, and Frans Josef van Beeck. Krieg takes seriously the conviction of scholars from any number of disciplines that personal narratives can, and indeed, should undergird conceptual discourse, so he is at pains to sketch out the comity which can exist between the narrative line of the gospel proclamation and the more abstracted work of systematic theologians.

Story Shaped Christology: The Role of Narratives in Identifying Jesus Christ, *by Robert A. Krieg, C.S.C., Paulist, $8.95, 169 pp.*

The scope of Krieg's book is vast but in a compact space he ranges over a good deal of learning with clarity and conviction. Readers who work through this volume will not only learn about what has been done but get some tantalizing hints on directions for further study. I was particularly taken with Krieg's summary assertion that the unity of Jesus Christ's life is an actual narrative that "begins before time, runs through history, and reaches into the future." That is not only true of the Christologies of the New Testament but indicates something which John Donahue also emphasizes in his work on the parables: the reception of the New Testament includes not only how the Gospels were "received" by their respective destinations (e.g., the Markan church) but how they have been received in the history of the tradition and how they might be received as they are proclaimed against the pull of the future.

Professor Fredriksen's book is much more ambitious in scope than that of either Donahue or Krieg. She sets out—once again—on that stupendous task of tracing out the relationship of the historical Jesus of Nazareth to the Christ preached by the early church against the background of both classical and Jewish culture of the first century of the common era. Her strategy is to reverse the normal order of proceeding with such an enterprise. She begins with the last of the New Testament documents like the Gospel of John and works her way back to the earliest testimonies of Paul and the Gospel of Mark.

From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Images of Jesus, *by Paula Fredriksen, Yale, $22.50, 256 pp.*

She does this, she says, in order to avoid the common pitfalls of trying to uncover the earliest strata about Jesus in the New Testament and working forward. Fredriksen feels that such a procedure is unnecessarily teleological, i.e., such strategies often assume that the evolution of the Jesus proclamation towards the high Christology of John is inexorable and monodirectional. She

LAWRENCE S. CUNNINGHAM *is a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame. His books include* The Catholic Experience *and* The Catholic Faith: An Introduction, *both from Paulist Press.*

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shrewdly points out that when one compares early material (Paul) and very late material (John) one finds, in both, a high Christology. How explain that anomaly if one insists on an evolutionary trajectory? She wishes to stay with the avail-

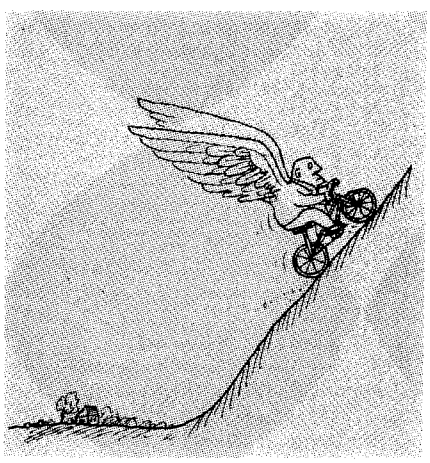
The Gospel in History: Portrait of a Teaching Church/The Origins of Christian Education, *by Marianne Sawicki, Paulist, $12.95, 298 pp.*

able texts and so "by tracing their backward trajectory, we move chronologically closer to their point of origin, that documentary vacuum inhabited by Jesus of Nazareth. We stop where our texts leave us, in the Gentile communities of the Mediterranean around the year 50 A.D., some twenty years after Jesus' execution." She stops there, of course, because she writes as a historian and that, she feels, is where the evidence leaves her. This is not an evasion. We need the historical enterprise because, as she says in the penultimate paragraph of the book, "bad history, for the church, results in bad theology. . . ."

I am too much of an amateur in this area to know whether or not this book will receive the accolades of Frederiksen's scholarly peers. I can tell you what I liked about it: its sense of scholarship and a becoming intellectual modesty (she tells us when she is launching a hypothesis and she is honest to note her use of "it may be" or "it is plausible"); its strong sensitivity to the Jewish matrix out of which Jesus emerged; and the care with which she made this work accessible to the general reader. She not only writes well but supplies us with bibliographies, suggested readings, indices of both the scriptures and of ancient sources in addition to a thorough general index of names and subjects. It is always a pleasure to open a book which keeps the reader's needs so firmly in mind.

Marianne Sawicki's field is religious education and her book attempts to show how the Gospel was taught over the centuries. As Martin Marty notes in his Foreword to the volume, there is more than church history here. Sawicki blends a selective history of the church in the West (she examines selected centuries in successive chapters) with a pedagogical theory that involves awareness of what is being taught, who is doing the teaching, and how the teacher(s), of necessity, modify and shape the content of the teaching for an audience that also lives in a determined culture. Each chapter examines not only teaching formally understood but how teaching gets fleshed out in care-giving and cult.

The merit of Sawicki's approach is that it puts Christian education into close dialogue with both history and historical theology. Those involved in the educa-



tional ministry will find much instruction in these pages. If I have a criticism of the book at all it is that the sources Sawicki used for her historical chapters are not very appetizing. Despite the many splendid general works on the medieval church, for example, she relies heavily on the not very reliable Will Durant and such old warhorses as Charles Poulet and Joseph McSorley. Not to use, to cite just one notable example, Jean LeClercq's classic study *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, is a conspicuous omission in a book on the historical evolution of Christian education. Nor was I enamored of her decision to do her own translations of the Bible since her renditions are, in places, laughable. Despite these reservations, one must say that this book covers a good deal of ground, has some suggestive ideas, and manages to keep the historical narrative lively and readable. There is a helpful summary of her main points at the end of each chapter; the book also has a satisfactory index.

In Water and in Blood: A Spirituality of Solidarity and Hope, *by Robert J. Schreiter, Crossroad, $10.95, 141 pp.*

Robert Schreiter writes that if "spirituality cannot relate to the great religious traditions from which it has sprung, then it has lost its memory and its roots." To forestall that happening he has given us an extended meditation on the concept of blood as it has been used in the Christian theological tradition. Schreiter wants to get beyond both the fundamentalist use of that term ("washed in the Blood of the Lamb") and the more sentimental effusions of Catholic devotionalism. He rightly points out that the term blood has a complex and polyvalent range of meanings in the Bible which touch on a large number of various doctrines. This book had its origins in a series of lectures delivered in Chile to his confreres in the Society of the Precious Blood which helps to explain the liberationist resonances in his subtitle and, more substantively, in the text itself.

In Water and in Blood falls somewhere between a collection of carefully edited biblical meditations and a systematic theology of a particular theological theme with a long and rich tradition behind it. Schreiter considers texts that extend from Exodus and Leviticus to John's Book of Revelations, using, roughly, a method of correlation as he unfolds the exegetical tradition over against our contemporary situation. A crisply written epilogue assays, by way of summary, a spirituality based on the Blood of Christ.

Schreiter's book is valuable because it nicely illustrates what, ponderously, I will call a hermeneutics of retrieval. He takes a theme, not conspicuously honored in contemporary Christianity, and

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shows how that theme has a deep history in the past both biblical and ecclesial and, further, how that theme can be revisited in the light of our theology and experience and given new rigor and pertinence. It is precisely the kind of enterprise that is much needed today. Schreiter provides us with a model to show us how it can be done.

All of the books discussed in these notes testify to the enormous fecundity of present-day biblical scholarship in one way or another. They also testify to the ways in which the biblical proclamation incarnates itself in concrete ways in the historical unfolding of the Christian tradition. Finally, in their various ways, they demonstrate how other disciplines can energize and illumine the study of the scriptures and their reception in history. Like the householder of the gospel, they bring forth both old things and new. □

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 674)

ble—after the Brundtland Report, the World Conference on the changing atmosphere (Toronto, June 1988) attended by 350 scientists in remarkable agreement, the discoveries about the ozone layer and the fragility of the oceans—to call the Club of Rome appeals "apocalyptic" in this dismissive way. Berry is not sanguine; he is concerned about the long-term survival of the human species, as anyone who has been reading this year's news might well be.

SISTER ANNE LONERGAN

The author replies:

If Sister Lonergan reads me as describing Berry as a "hopeless romantic," she misread me. If she thinks that the urgent concerns of scientists can be called apocalyptic or that their findings sound like the language of the Club of Rome then we simply read the news with different spectacles. Finally, I did not call Berry "sanguine" or talk about "a dawning ecological age." Lighten up. I liked the book.

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New Testament Opening

Maryknoll School of Theology in Maryknoll, New York, the graduate school of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, announces an opening for a full-time member in New Testament studies beginning Fall 1989. Candidates should hold a Ph.D and be prepared to teach introductory and elective courses in NT studies (English). The School has an international student body and encourages the use of adult learning pedagogies. Nationals of other countries, persons with international mission experience, women and minorities are invited to apply. The position brings opportunity for dialogue across disciplines, for international research and travel, plus benefits package and salary commensurate with experience. Apply by February 15, 1989 to Dr. Kathleen M. O'Connor, Chair, NT Search Committee, Maryknoll School of Theology, Maryknoll, New York 10545.

Theology Openings

Maryknoll School of Theology in Ossining, New York, the graduate school of the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, announces two openings for full-time faculty members in theology beginning Fall 1989. One position—Director of the M.A. program in Cross-Cultural Ministry—will include responsibilities to develop the program and teach courses in systematic theology. Second position is in the field of spirituality, liturgy, and sacraments in the programs for cross-cultural ministry and justice and peace. The School has an international student body and encourages the use of adult learning pedagogies. Nationals of other countries, persons with international mission experience, women, and minorities are encouraged to apply. The positions bring opportunities for dialogue across disciplines, for international research and travel, plus benefits package. Salary commensurate with experience. Ph.D. or equivalent is required for both appointments. Apply by February 15 to: Dr. Curt Cadorette, Chair, Systematic Theology Search Committee, Maryknoll School of Theology, Maryknoll, New York 10545.

Religion/Intellectual Life Colloquium

The Association for Religion and Intellectual Life (ARIL) announces the sixth Coolidge Research Colloquium for individual study of intellectual-religious topics, for communal living and ecumenical dialogue at Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, MA. June 4-June 30, 1989. Support includes room and board, and access to EDS, Harvard, and other Boston libraries. Resource theologians for 1989 are Rabbi Jonathan Omer-Man, the Reverend Jack Boozer, and Sr. Nancy Malone, O.S.U. APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 1, 1989. For more information contact Beth and Mel Kaiser, 815 Dolley Madison Road, Greensboro, NC 17410 (919-292-5616) or ARIL (914-654- 5425).

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Index to Volume CXV

January 15, 1988 to December 16, 1988

Articles and Poetry

Amidei, Nancy ..... Poor people: advocates on their own 76
Where the money goes 134
The worker's mite 295
What came in like a lion 551
Anderson, Chris ..... Watching a man drown 141
Apostolos-Cappadona, Diane ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 661
Baldovin, John F. ..... Celebrations in flesh and blood communities 54
Dear friends: the Eucharist: who may preside? 460
Bell, Robert ..... Pining away with Buck & Florence 70
Berberyusz, Ewa ..... Who doesn't leave Poland? 329
Berube, Maurice R. ..... The powerful teachers' unions 207
Beverly, Elizabeth (& Richard Wightman Fox) ..... Letting Sanji die 299
Bishop, Jordan ..... Trading away the future? 678
Booth, Rosemary ..... A concentration of purpose 426
Bouvier, Virginia M. ..... On the threshold 72
Defeat of a dictator 580
Breslin, John B. ..... Playing out the patterns of sin & grace 652
Brown, Sheila ..... A Holy Week conversion 69
Burkhalter, Holly (& Jean-Marie Simon) ..... Truth & its consequences 488
Burkhart, Marian ..... Horton Foote's many roads home 110
Burris, Keith ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 665
Butler, David ..... Half-time at the wake 79
Cadnum, Michael ..... Ghost: a poem 114
Callahan, Daniel ..... Vital distinctions, mortal questions 397
Callahan, Sidney ..... To instruct the ignorant 238
Carlin, David R., Jr. ..... This, too, shall pass 8
Citizens of a good polis 73
Creeping neutralism 135
Hoofbeats of revival 265
Floating in mid-air 327
For the love of the game 395
For the 'L' of it 458
It's my party 521
The mind has a life, too 582
Oh, to be a Hoosier 646
Čecala, Kathy Petersen ..... Does anyone remember J. Blue? 590
Chapin, Jim (& Patrick Lacefield) ..... El Salvador: Land of no compromise 267
Church, F. Forrester ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 152
Cisneros, Henry ..... Counter-power in San Antonio 75
Coady, Mary Frances ..... Little Gidding: 'Where prayer has been valid' 501
Cohen, Mitchell ..... Occupying each other 235
Israel goes to the polls 560
Cunningham, Agnes ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 158
DeBernardo, Francis ..... Engaging words 338
deCormier-Shekerjian, Regina ..... Kinship: a poem 565
The woman who steals ham bones: a poem 335
Paloma: a poem 366
The first telling: a poem 530
Dieter, Richard C. ..... The death penalty dinosaur 11
Dinges, William D. ..... Lefebvre abandons ship 420
Dinter, Paul E. ..... Catholics at Columbia 203
Ditsky, John ..... Bites: a poem 405
Dittenberner-Jax, Norita ..... It was like this: a poem 405
Dorris, Michael ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 660
Downs, Peter ..... Drudgery at Wentzville 453
Doyle, Dennis M. ..... The meaning of AIDS 343
Drucker, Linda ..... Washington cries uncle 391
Dulles, Avery ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 157
Elias, John ..... Once the introductions are over 566
Ellner, Steve ..... Politics of the probable 614
Elshtain, Jean Bethke ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the pastoral on women 361
Lessons from Amherst 165
Englund, Steven ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 662
Fandel, John ..... Incident at Damascus, Ark.: a poem 114
Endangered species: a poem 114
Faulhaber, Clare Will .... Ballad of male hegemony: a poem 466
Fellner, Jamie ..... A murderous democracy 6
Fichter, Joseph H. ..... Rome welcomes married priests 177
Finn, Molly ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 664
Finn, James ..... The ambassador goes home 548
Fleischman, Janet ..... 'Glasnost' meets the wall 166
Fox, Richard Wightman (& Elizabeth Beverly) ..... Letting Sanji die 299
Gaffney, James ..... The nonunmistakable magisterium 261
Garvey, John ..... The academy in bloom 41
Is there no end in sight? 105
Pilgrims of the absolute 167
Family photographs 233
Distraction at the heart 297
Planetary influences 359
The universe & me 423
It's hard to believe 489
Creeping dimness 552
Standing in for Jesus 615
Faithful conflict 681
Gerhart, Mary ..... Spiritualities of the world: religious booknotes 380
Theologians & feminism: religious booknotes 635
Gibbons, Russell W. ..... Remaking cities 229
Gifford-Martin, Nell ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 153
Gneuhs, Geoffrey ..... Still awaiting the second spring 174
Griffin, Emilie ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the pastoral on women 361
Critics' choices for Christmas 659
Hahn, Jeffrey W. ..... How new is Gorbachev's 'new thinking'? 372
Gorbachev's gamble 613
Harayda, Janice ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 666

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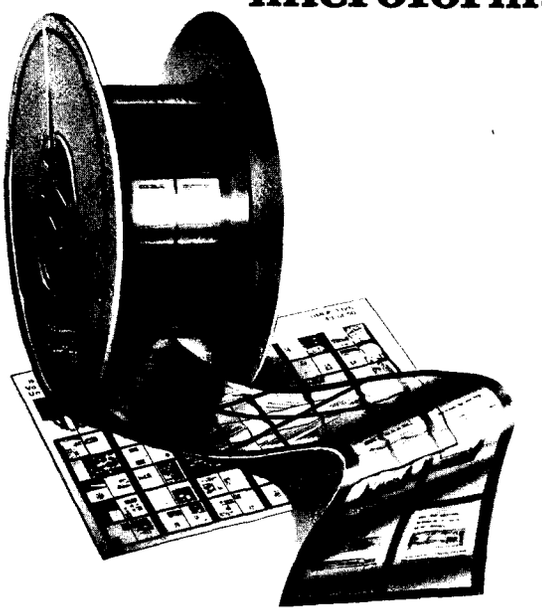

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Hazo, Samuel ..... A Crossing: a poem 408
Update: a poem 303
Hehir, J. Bryan ..... The doubting elites 40
Taking on the super rivals 169
Remembering Paul Ramsey 232
One hit, 0 runs, 3 errors 424
Going forward 553
Middle East dead end 680
Hellwig, Monika K. ..... Scholars & bishops 38
Himes, Kenneth R. & Michael J. ..... The myth of self-interest 493
Howard, Jane ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 658
Hoyt, Robert G. ..... Sex—how odd of God 389
An anthology for Christmas 683
Johnson, Elizabeth .... Religious Book Week critics' choices 151
Jordan, Patrick ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 667
Jorstad, Eric ..... What Johnny can't read 367
Keegan, John E. ..... The Haitian tragedy 519
Kelly, Mary Pat ..... Jesus gets the beat: an interview with Martin Scorsese 467
Kirby, Mark ..... Confirmation: a poem 405
Klein, Rosemary ..... Molding a cry & a song 14
Komonchak, Joseph A. (& James H. Provost) ..... Ready for Rome 102
Komonchak, Joseph A. ..... Not Catholic enough? 146
Kovler, Peter B. ..... Jackson's candidacy 200
Kusnet, David ..... Squaring compassion and self-interest 89
Lacefield, Patrick (& Jim Chapin) ..... El Salvador: Land of no compromise 267
Laczniak, Gene R. (& T.R. Martin) ..... Executives' scoreboard 336
Leckey, Dolores R. .... Jessica Powers: out of silence, music 485
Lindeman, Jack ..... Growing deaf: a poem 173
Madsen, Richard (& William M. Sullivan) ..... The bishops & their critics 117
Mainelli, Helen Kenik ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 155
Manuel, Anne ..... No place to be neutral 107
Hushing up witnesses 325
Marget, Madeline ..... Madeline & Ernie 491
Martin, T.R. (& Gene R. Laczniak) ..... Executives' scoreboard 336
Marty, Martin E. ..... The state of the disunion 43
Mazziotta, Richard ..... How I declined the invitation 46
McCarthy, Abigail ..... Looking for honest Abe 9
The art of compromise 136
When the cheering stops 264
Impossible, twenty years ago 326
The way things work 394
Defining sin 457
Global peril, local action 520
Where the kids are 581
Women who step forward 647
McWilliams, Wilson Carey ..... What will Jackson do? 486
Merton, Thomas ..... Elegy for a Trappist: a poem 651
Mitcham, Marylee ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the pastoral on women 361
Mitchell, John J., ... Knowing when to stop 271
Myers, Joan Rohr ..... The opaqueness of bodies: a poem 374
Nixon, John, Jr. ..... Most of my Aprils: a poem 231
Nobles, Edward ..... Heart ear: a poem 251
O'Brien, David J. ..... Preschool penury 198
O'Brien, Tom ..... An interview with Godfrey Reggio 304
Orsi, Robert ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 150
Partridge, Dixie ..... Guide for September: a poem 538
Her listening: autumn on 10th Street: a poem 538
Patrick, Anne E. ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the women's pastoral 361
Pawlikowski, John T. ..... Judaism: the genius of self-renewal 434
Peters, Ted ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 156

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
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Petrie, Paul ..... Memory's end: a poem 114
Policano, Joseph D. ..... An elusive procedure 102
Porter, Anne ..... In Holy Week: a poem 219
Farmyard by moonlight: a poem 307
Looking at the sky: a poem 374
The wall: a poem 500
Here on earth: a poem 685
Provost, James H.
(& Joseph A. Komonchak) ..... Ready for Rome 102
Queenan, Joe ..... The phantoms of the press 103
Ramirez, Antonio ..... Veronica's handshake 677
Raymo, Chet ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 663
Readers response ..... The Catholic legacy & abortion 82
Redmont, Jane ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the pastoral on women 361
Riegert, Norbert L. ..... You get what you pay for 198
Rubin, Larry ..... Harrisburg, mon amour: a poem 114
Russett, Bruce ..... Old business & new 295
Sauro, Joan ..... Death in the convent 171
Scharper, Stephen B. ..... Singapore squeeze 262
Scheper, George L. ..... Jesus wrestles with God 471
Searle, Mark ..... Renewing the liturgy—again 617
Segers, Mary C. ..... Sexism, sin, & grace: responses to the pastoral on women 361
Shannon, William H. ..... The future of Thomas Merton 649
Sheed, Wilfrid ..... William Buckley's several selves 584
Shuster, George N. ..... Terror in Vienna 132
Siegel, Fred ..... Campaign across cultural divides 138
The return to populism 241
Election '88—competing elites 523
Simon, Jean-Marie (& Holly Burkhalter) ..... Truth & its consequences 488
Skerrett, Ellen ..... Whose church is it, anyway? 622
Skloot, Floyd ..... Shoreline life: a poem 405
Smith, Karen Sue ..... Michel blows his horn 456
The story of St. Teresa's 629
Critics' choices for Christmas 667
Smith, LeRoy ..... Legacies: a poem 142
Spampinato, Joseph P. ..... Who builds God's house? 357
Stevens, Douglas ..... The forest & the trees 526
Steinfels, Margaret O'Brien ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 666
Sullivan, Andrew ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 659
Sullivan, William M.
(& Richard Madsen) ..... The bishops & their critics 117
Timmerman, Don ..... Dear friends: the Eucharist: who may preside? 460
Toolan, David ..... Let the bishops take no guff: an interview with Eliot Janeway 332
Critics' choices for Christmas 668
Ulanov, Ann Belford ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 149
Wakefield, Dan ..... Critics' choices for Christmas 660
White, Robert E. ..... Blaming the villains, not the victims 555
Wilken, Robert L. ..... Religious Book Week critics' choices 154
Wrong, Terence ..... A double-edged sword 392
Zahn, Gordon C. ..... The pope in Austria 421
Dear friends: the Eucharist: who may preside? 460

Book Reviews

A Common Room:
By Reynolds Price ..... Dan Wakefield 438
A Far Cry from Kensington:
By Muriel Spark ..... Robert E. Hosmer 531
A Fighting Chance:
By Joseph P. Martino ..... James Turner Johnson 502
A Renaissance Tapestry:
By Kate Simon ..... David Toolan 540
A Small Place:
By Jamaica Kincaid ..... Peggy Ellsberg 602
A Southern Family:
By Gail Godwin ..... Suzanne Rowen 187
A Theology of Liberation:
By Gustavo Gutierrez ..... Dennis P. McCann 594
A Woman Run Mad:
By John L'Heureux ..... Linda Simon 377
Abortion and Divorce in Western Law:
By Mary Ann Glendon ..... Daniel A. Degnan 473
Academic Life, The:
By Burton R. Clark ..... Raymond A. Schroth 213
Adam, Eve, and the Serpent:
By Elaine Pagels ..... Michael J. Himes 570
Adios Mr. Moxley:
By Josephine Jacobsen ..... David Toolan 379
American and Catholic:
Edited by Joe Holland
& Anne Barsanti ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 508
American Catholic Parish, The: Vols 1 & 2:
Edited by Jay P. Dolan ..... Robert E. Sullivan 533
American Catholicism:
By John Deedy ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 509
An Introduction to Christian Faith:
By Walter Kasper ..... John Elias 566
An Introduction to the Faith of Catholics:
By Richard Chilson ..... John Elias 566
An Unlikely Catechism:
By Matthew Reiser ..... John Elias 566
And the Band Played On:
By Randy Shilts ..... Peter Marks 252
And a Voice to Sing With:
By Joan Baez ..... Patrick Lacefield 126
Anthills of the Savannah:
By Chinua Achebe ..... John B. Breslin 310
At the Origins of Modern Atheism:
By Michael J. Buckley ..... Thomas V. Morris 58
Authority, Community, and Conflict:
Edited by
Madonna Kolbenschlag ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 443
Beneath the American Renaissance:
By David S. Reynolds ..... Mark Feeney 376
Bonfire of the Vanities, The:
By Tom Wolfe ..... Paul Baumann 120
Books for Believers:
By Raymond A. Schroth ..... David Toolan 505
Born to Pay:
By Phillip Longman ..... Drew Christiansen 247
Boss, The:
By Athan G. Theoharis
& John Stuart Cox ..... Saul Maloff 411
Catholic Christianity:
By Richard Chilson ..... John Elias 566
Catholic Faith, The:
By Lawrence Cunningham ..... John Elias 566
Catholic Moment, The:
By Richard John Neuhaus ..... Joseph A. Komonchak 146
Catholicism Today:
By Matthew Kohmescher ..... John Elias 566
Catholicism:
By Richard McBrien ..... John Elias 566
Chile, Death in the South:
By Jacobo Timerman ..... Virginia M. Bouvier 249
Christ Among Us:
By Anthony Wilhelm ..... John Elias 566
Christian Foundation:
By Kathleen Fischer and Thomas Hart ..... John Elias 566
Christian Socialism:

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

By John C. Cort ..... George Woodcock 537
Christian Spirituality:
Edited by Jill Raitt with Bernard McGinn
& John Meyendorff ..... Mary Gerhart 380
Church's Confession of Faith, The:
By Walter Kasper ..... John Elias 566
Church, Ecumenism, and Politics:
By Joseph Ratzinger ..... Joseph A. Komonchak 572
Church, The:
By Ladislas Orsy ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 443
Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek,
Edited by A. H. Armstrong ..... Mary Gerhart 380
Courage to Care, The:
Edited by Carol Rittner
and Sondra Myers ..... Jack Riemer 375
Cuomo Commission Report, The:
By The Cuomo Commission on
Trade and Competitiveness ..... Kenneth P. Jameson 568
Cuomo, Mario: A Biography:
By Robert S. McElvaine ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 507
Dangerous Dossiers:
By Herbert Mitgang ..... Saul Maloff 411
Death & Birth of Judaism:
By Jacob Neusner ..... John T. Pawlikowski 434
Emerging Parish, The:
By Joseph Gremillion
& Jim Castelli ..... Russell Barta 534
Enchantments of Judaism, The:
By Jacob Neusner ..... John T. Pawlikowski 434
Essential Catholicism:
By Thomas Bokenkotter ..... John Elias 566
Facing West from Calilfornia's Shores:
By David Toolan ..... William F. Vendley 282
From Jesus to Christ:
By Paula Fredricksen ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 443
Fiction of Walker Percy, The:
By John Edward Hardy ..... James P. Degnan 378
Galileo Galilei:
Edited by Paul Cardinal Poupard ..... Robert L. Spaeth 284
Galileo: Heretic:
By Pietro Redondi ..... Robert L. Spaeth 284
God and the New Haven Railway:
By George Dennis O'Brien ..... David Toolan 124
Goddess Obscured, The:
By Pamela Berger ..... Mary Gerhart 635
Good Hearts:
By Reynolds Price ..... Dan Wakefield 438
Gorbachev Phenomenon, The:
By Moshe Lewin ..... Jeffrey W. Hahn 372
Gorbachev's Challenge:
By Marshall Goldman ..... Jeffrey W. Hahn 372
Gospel in History, The:
By Marianne Sawicki ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 694
Gospel in Parable, The:
By John R. Donahue ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 694
Great Divide, The:
By Studs Terkel ..... Paul Baumann 688
Green Dark, The:
By Marie Ponsot ..... Eavan Boland 595
Heroes of Their Own Lives:
By Linda Gordon ..... Mary Pellauer 536
If I'm a Christian, Why Be a Catholic?:
By James Hanson ..... John Elias 566
Illegitimacy of Jesus, The:
By Jane Schaberg ..... Mary Gerhart 636
In Pursuit of Love:
By Vincent J. Genovesi ..... Denise Lardner Carmody 60
In Water and in Blood:
By Robert J. Schreiter ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 695
International Court of Justice at a Crossroads:
Edited by Lori F. Damrosch ..... Howard N. Meyer 540
Islamic Spirituality:
Edited by Seyyed Hossein Nasr ..... Mary Gerhart 380
Jewish Spirituality from the Bible through the Middle Ages:
Edited by Arthur Green ..... Mary Gerhart 380
John Calvin:
By William J. Bouwsma ..... Richard Marius 285
John Cardinal O'Connor:
By Nat Hentoff ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 443
Journey through Menopause:
By Christine Downing ..... Mary Gerhart 638
Judaism:
By Jacob Neusner ..... John T. Pawlikowski 434
Judaism & Christianity:
By Jacob Neusner ..... John T. Pawlikowski 434
Judaism & Scripture:
By Jacob Neusner ..... John T. Pawlikowski 434
Keeping the Faith:
By Philip Gleason ..... Patrick Jordan 478
Levine & Co.:
By Douglas Frantz ..... Eliot Janeway 183
Libra:
By Don DeLillo ..... Peter LaSalle 598
Literary Guide to the Bible, The:
Edited by Robert Alter
& Frank Kermode ..... Pheme Perkins 122
Looking at Our Faith:
Edited by Thomas Ivory ..... John Elias 566
Love in the Time of Cholera:
By Gabriel Garcia Marquez ..... Elizabeth A. Beverly 410
Making Public Policy:
By Steven Kelman ..... John Brandl 22
Motherself:
By Kathryn Allen Robuzzi ..... Mary Gerhart 637
Mystery of Christ, The:
By Thomas Keating ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 314
Nazi Doctors, The:
By Robert Jay Lifton ..... Thomas T. Lewis 215
New Dictionary of Theology, The:
Edited by Joseph A. Komonchak ..... John H. Wright 474
New Experiment in Democracy:
Dennis P. McCann ..... Richard P. McBrien 24
Nuclear Deterrence, Morality, and Realism:
By John Finnis, Joseph M. Boyle, Jr.,
& Germain Grisez ..... James Turner Johnson 502
Old Enemy, The:
By Neil Forsyth ..... Jeffrey Burton Russell 185
Open Mind, Open Heart:
By Thomas Keating ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 314
Origins of the Federal Reserve System:
By James Livingston ..... John B. Judis 280
People, Priests, and Prelates:
By Patrick W. Carey ..... Arlene Swidler 219
Perestroika:
By Mikhail Gorbachev ..... Jeffrey W. Hahn 372
Presenting the Catholic Faith:
By Frank DeSiano ..... John Elias 566
Priests in Working-Class Blue:
Oscar L. Arnal ..... Joan Lenardon 217
Proportionalism:
By Bernard Hoose ..... James Gaffney 476
Psyche's Sisters:
By Christine Downing ..... Mary Gerhart 638
Quinn's Book:
By William Kennedy ..... Peter A. Quinn 308
Reception of Vatican II:
By Guiseppe Alberigo ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 441
Religion and Culture
Edited by Timothy P. Fallon
and Philip Boo Riley ..... Joseph M. Powers 26
Remembering America:
By Richard Goodwin ..... Arthur J. Moore 600
Reshaping of Catholicism, The:
By Avery Dulles ..... Robert Imbelli 632
Restructuring of American Religion, The:
By Robert Wuthnow ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 508

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Returning:
By Dan Wakefield ..... Jane Redmont 316
Revelation:
By Peggy Payne ..... Fanny Howe 504
Rich in Love:
By Josephine Humphreys ..... Suzanne Rowen 187
Right from the Beginning:
By Patrick J. Buchanan ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 507
Roots of the Catholic Tradition, The:
By Thomas Rausch ..... John Elias 566
Sacrament of Sexuality:
By Morton Kelsey and
Barbara Kelsey ..... Denise Lardner Carmody 60
Science and the Unborn:
By Clifford Grobstein ..... Thomas A. Shannon 691
Secrets of the Temple:
By William Greider ..... John B. Judis 280
Setting Limits:
By Daniel Callahan ..... Drew Christiansen 247
Sexuality:
By Mary G. Durkin ..... Denise Lardner Carmody 60
Spare Days:
By Marvin Barrett ..... Paul Wilkes 693
Stealing Home:
By Haim Chertok ..... Gerald Weales 413
Story Shaped Christology:
By Robert A. Krieg ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 694
Takeover Game, The:
By John Brooks ..... Eliot Janeway 183
Technology and Justice:
By George Parkin Grant ..... J. M. Cameron 250
Tenants of Time, The:
By Thomas Flanagan ..... J.V. Long 347
Tensions in Moral Theology:
By Charles Curran ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 442
Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology:
Edited by Anne Lonergan
& Caroline Richards ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 573
To Dwell in Peace:
By Daniel Berrigan ..... Peggy Rosenthal 93
Tracks:
By Louise Erdrich ..... Christopher Vecsey 596
Trading Places:
By Clyde V. Prestowitz, Jr. ..... Kenneth P. Jameson 568
Transforming Grace:
By Anne E. Carr ..... Mary Gerhart 635
Truth about Lorin Jones, The:
By Alison Lurie ..... Barbara A. Bannon 690
Understanding Catholicism:
By Monika Hellwig ..... John Elias 567
Vatican II:
Edited by Lucien Richard ..... Lawrence S. Cunningham 443
Volcker:
By William R. Neikirk ..... John B. Judis 280
Waldheim:
By Bernard Cohen
& Luc Rosenzweig ..... Gordon C. Zahn 348
Waldheim: The Missing Years:
By Robert Edwin Herzstein ..... Gordon C. Zahn 348
Warsaw Ghetto, The:
By Wladyslaw Bartoszewski ..... Bogumil Kosciesza 475
Wheat That Springeth Green:
By J. F. Powers ..... Walter H. Clark, Jr. 592
Where Is God Now?:
By Juliana M. Casey ..... Mary C. Segers 436
Whose Justice? Which Rationality?:
By Alasdair MacIntyre ..... Richard J. Bernstein 306
Willa Cather:
By James Woodress ..... Margaret Wimsatt 477
William F. Buckley, Jr.:
By John B. Judis ..... Wilfrid Sheed 584
Women and War:
By Jean Bethke Elshtain ..... Mary C. Segers 436
Yellow Wind, The:
By David Grossman ..... Gregory Baum 309

Index of Principal Subjects in Articles, Editorials, and Letters

Abortion, and Catholic church, 82
AIDS,
books on, 343, 418
Catholic church, 4, 159, 479
children, 675
contraceptives, 159
health insurance, 388
needle-exchange program 645
social policy 542
Altruists, 388, 683
Animal rights, 130
Anti-Semitism, 132, 546
Arab summit in Algeria, 392
Architecture, and ecclesiology, 357
Arms control,
INF treaty, 40, 69
nonoffensive defense, 611
Artificial heart research, 452
Astrology, 359
Austria, Nazism in, 132
Bethlehem, Christmas and, 677
Bishops' pastorals,
economy, 75, 76, 117, 130, 197, 198, 332, 336,338, 450, 453
on nuclear weapons, 37, 162, 170, 191, 295
women, 227, 382, 418
Bishops' pastoral on women,
responses to, 361
Bishops' statement on AIDS, 4, 159
Blacks & Jews, 322
Bork, Robert H., 68
Brazil, Yanomami Indians, 294, 646
Buckley, William F., Jr., 584-588
Bush, George, 523, 579, 643
Byzantine Rite Ruthenian Eparchy, 574
Canadian elections, 678
Capital punishment, 11, 226, 254, 255
Catholic church,
abortion, 8, 82, 610
adult catechisms, 566
AIDS, 4, 418, 531
birth control, 339, 387, 394, 482-511, 546
bishops' conferences, 102, 644
Central America, 99
church renovation, 622, 629
cultural formation, 146
dissent, 38, 261, 315, 460-466, 574, 642, 668, 669, 670
doctrine, 38, 261, 355
"Draft Statement on Episcopal Conferences," 644
economy, 332
ecumenism, 43, 46, 258, 287
Eucharist, 460-466, 642, 668, 669, 670
euthanasia, 397, 418, 443
Guatemala, 488
Haiti, 519
homosexuality, 485, 610, 631
Humanae vitae, 387, 389, 394, 482, 511, 546
interfaith communion, 46, 238, 287
Jaegerstaetter, Franz, 421
labor-management, 453
Lambeth Conference, 452
Last Temptation of Christ, The, 467, 470, 471, 483, 518, 578, 605
liturgical renewal, 617-622, 629
married priests, 177, 322
medical ethics, 271, 397, 418, 443-446, 514
Michel Virgil, 456
Nazism, 132, 546
Nicaragua, 69
Presidential campaign, 677
"right to die," 271, 418
sacraments, 54, 79
sexism, 457
sexuality, 387
Singapore, 262, 263
Soviet Union, 555
women, 222, 326, 361, 382, 418, 457
Central America, 99, 555
Change, unassimilated, 394
Chemical warfare, 261
Chile, 386, 580, 677

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China, 98
Christmas & the art of giving, 683
Colombia, political violence in, 6
Commonweal, 130
  sense of humor, 2
  Associates, 28
Congress, federal budget 134
COPS, 75
Costa Rica, 517
Cultural formation 146
Culture in America,
  distraction and frivolity, 297
Curran, Charles E., 38, 261, 355, 420
Czechoslovokia, church in, 174
Dearden, Cardinal John, 553
Death,
  capital punishment, 11, 226, 254, 255

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  drowning, 141
  in other cultures, 299, 318
  in the convent, 171
Deforestation in India, 526
Democrats, 89, 138, 241, 458, 486, 521, 523, 646
  abortion, 521, 643
  Dukakis-Bush, 486, 523-525, 579, 643, 646
  populism, 241, 523, 643, 646
Doctrine, 38
Dubus, Andre 652-656
East Germany, human rights in 166
Ecology, 163, 451, 520
Economy,
  myth of self-interest, 493
  race, 35, 66
  unemployment, 197
  world debt, 67
Ecumenism, 43, 46, 258, 287
  inter-communion, 46, 258, 287
  married priests, 322
Education,
  campus alcohol, 41, 389
  Catholic school faculty salaries 198,
  Catholics at Columbia University, 203, 322
  colleges & racism, 165
  core curriculum, 73, 98, 194
  disadvantaged, 196
  ethics, 73, 195
  literature vs. science, 582
  modern universities, 41, 73, 98, 194, 389
  racism, 165
  religious dissent, 367, 574
  Supreme Court, 195, 367
  teachers' unions, 207
  values, 581
  vocational training, 290
  women college presidents, 201
El Salvador,
  Christian Democrats in, 357
  church worker intimidation, 325
  election in, 267, 645
Eliot, T.S., 501
Energy, second crisis in, 163
Ethicists, 98
Ethics
  euthanasia, 397, 418, 443–446, 514, 541
  fetal tissue research, 676
  organ transplants from anencephalic infants, 3, 194, 484
Ethiopia, 66
Euthanasia, 397, 418, 443–446, 514, 541
Faith, life of, 489
Family, 233
Faulhaber, Clare Will, 578
Foote, Horton, 110-115, 290
Fox, Matthew, 616
Gorbachev, Mikhail, books about, 372
Gordon, Mary, 426
Greene, Graham, 34
Greer, Joseph, (Rev.), 389
Guatemala, 488
Haiti, 519
Health care,
  artificial heart research costs, 452
  children with AIDS, 675
  euthanasia, 397, 418, 443-446, 514, 541
Holy Family Church, the fight to save, 622
Homeless housing, 259, 549
Homosexuality, and Catholic church, 485, 610, 631
Humanae vitae, 387, 387, 389, 394, 482, 505, 506, 510, 511, 546
Hunger, 5
INF Treaty, 37, 162, 190, 191
  nuclear waste 69,
Inter-American Court of Human Rights, 455
Interfaith communion, 46, 258, 287
Interfaith marriage, 491, 610
Israel
  criticism of, 294, 354
  elections, 560, 680
  West Bank riots 164, 235,393, 560, 644, 680
Jackson, Jesse, 208, 386, 419, 486
Jaegerstaetter, Franz, 421
Janeway, Eliot, 332
Just War teaching, 162, 190, 191
Kazantzakis, Nikos, 471
Labor, and dignity of the worker, 453, 638
Lambeth Conference, 452
Last Day, and Christianity, The, 105
Last Temptation of Christ, The, 467, 470, 483, 518, 578, 605
Lefebvre, Archbishop Marcel, 420, 574
Lester, Julius, 167, 322
Liberals and the "L" word, 458
Liberation theology, 98
Married priests, 177, 372
Medical technology,
  artificial feeding, 397, 418, 443-446, 514
  organ transplants, 3, 194, 484
Meese, Edwin, 228
Merton, Thomas, 649–652
Michel, Virgil, 456
Minimum wage legislation, 295
Monongahela River Valley, 229
Mr. Blue, 590
Mulroney, Brian, 678
Neusner, Jacob, 434
New Dictionary of Theology, The 578
Nicaragua, 99
  and Catholic life, 69
Noriega, Manuel, 391
Nuclear deterrence, 386
  and the INF Treaty 37, 162, 190, 191
Nuclear waste, and INF Treaty, 69
Nursing Home Quality Reform Act, 293
Opinions vs. facts, 327
Opus Dei, 322, 351
Palestine,
  and civil disorder, 36
  and Israel, 644, 680
Panama, 196, 391
Paraguay, 72, 290
Past, marginalizing the, 552
Pastorals, Sunday, 130
Paton, Alan, 292
PEN, 550
Persian Gulf War, 261
Philippines, 547
Pinochet, Augusto, 580, 678
Poetry,
  in prisons, 14
Poland, 329, 515
Politics,
  activism, 34
  campaign, 84, 241, 264, 486, 521, 523, 643, 646
  love of, 395
Pope John Paul II,
  Austrian visit, 421, 546
  reactions to "The Social Concerns of the Church," 169
  Sollicitudo rei socialis, 555
  tenth anniversary, 516

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U.S. visit, 130
Poverty, 549
and bishops' economic pastoral, 76
Powers, Jessica, 485
Prayer, 450
Presidential candidates, 138, 241, 486, 523
religion, 136
Press, 103
Prisoners, as poets, 14
Property crime in America, 646
Psychology & spiritual works of mercy, 238
Racism, in America, 35
Ramsey, Paul, 232
Reagan, Ronald,
and astrology, 359
economy, 579
foreign policy, 424
Reggio, Godfrey, 304
Religious neutralism, 135, 290
Religious revival, 265
Religious tolerance, 681
Rhetoric, and the Bishops' pastorals, 338, 450
Runyon v. McCrary, 291
Scorsese, Martin, 467-470, 518, 578
Secular humanism
& religious education, 327
Self-interest, myth of, 493
Sexism, 457
Shannon, William V., 548
Singapore, 262, 263
Spiritual works of mercy & psychology, 238
Spirituality, psychology of, 423
Steinfels, Peter, 38
Sumu Indians, 107
Supreme Court,
Runyon v. McCreary 291
school textbooks, 367
Surrogate motherhood, 51, 100, 550
Theology,
and "Doctrinal Responsibilities," 38
U.S., and Soviet Union, 8, 158, 194, 555
U.S.S.R.,
Christianity in, 356
religious dissidents in, 356
Unemployment, 66, 197
Unions,
worker-management relations and, 453
Venezuela, 614
Virtues, 9
Waldheim, Kurt, 132, 421, 546
Walesa, Lech, 515
Welfare reform, 551
Women, 647
Bishops' pastoral on, 326, 457
Catholic church, 130, 326, 361, 457
Women-Church, 2, 34, 62, 361
Yanomami Indians, 294, 646

Screen, by Tom O'Brien

. Cry in the Dark	656
. Month in the Country	211
A Taxing Woman	279
A World Apart	406
i Revoir les Enfants	181
ibette's Feast	211
g	406
Big Business	406
Bird	564
Broadcast News	49
Bull Durham	431
Crocodile Dundee II	370
Cry Freedom	340
Eight Men Out	564
Empire of the Sun	20
Everybody's All-American	656
Films, best of 1987	115
Frantic	210
Good Morning, Vietnam	49
Gorillas in the Mist	588
Hotel Terminus	631
Mystic Pizza	588
Patty	564
Pelle the Conqueror	686
Powaqqatsi	304
Rambo III	370
September	143
Shame	530
Sorceress	279
Stand and Deliver	340
Summer Story	530
Switching Channels	245
The Accused	589
The Grand Highway (Le Grand Chemin)	180
The House on Carroll Street	210
The Last Temptation of Christ	470
The Milagro Beanfield War	244
The Manchurian Candidate	498
Tucker	431
Walker	50
Wall Street	88
Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown	686

Stage, by Gerald Weales

A Midsummer Night's Dream	116
A Walk in the Woods	182
Hamlet	432
Into the Woods	18
M. Butterfly	245
Macbeth	432
Nixon in China	19
Reckless	687
Speed-the-Plow	371
The Cherry Orchard	115
The Road to Mecca	342

Art, by James Gardner

Stelliferous Stella	51

Art, by Geoffrey Gneuhs

Opening from the Heart: Modern Treasures from Prague	407

Dance, by Don McDonagh

Stars & Their Stripes: The American Musical Festival	408

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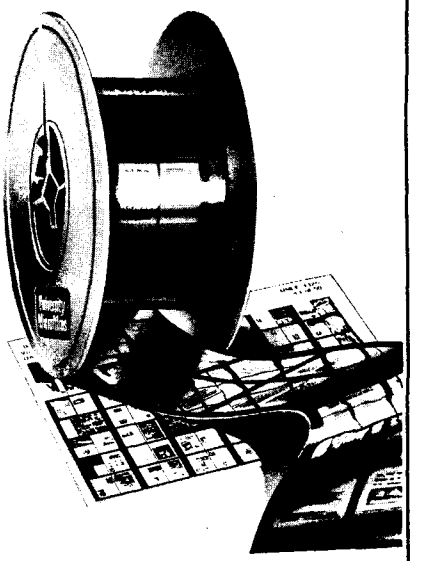

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